

## EDITORIAL

### THE PLATTER OF SPIRITUAL FOOD

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We have just witnessed the mega event of the celebration of the quadricentennial of the installation of the *Adi Granth Sahib*, held at Amritsar on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 2004. The *Granth* was installed by its compiler and major contributor, Guru Arjun Dev, four hundred years ago in the Harmandir Sahib with due ceremony. With Amritsar as the nucleus, the celebrations were organized at global level in which almost every Sikh participated. Major processions originating from different parts of the Indian subcontinent poured into the holy city. The crowds that assembled on the occasion were indeed unprecedented and unmanageable. The main function was attended by countless dignitaries including the President and the Prime Minister of India. The routes of the processions as well as the entire city of Amritsar were lavishly decorated. Illuminations marked the day, and every Sikh home lit up with candles or electric bulbs. The Golden temple premises presented a celestial scene. The SGPC that organized the whole show, issued Gold and Silver coins, and governments issued postal stamps to mark the occasion. A large number of seminars were organized all over the world, and most Sikh periodicals issued special numbers to pay their homage to Guru Granth Sahib.

The celebrations covered all this and much more. The enthusiasm of the masses was unbelievable. They once more demonstrated their devotion and commitment to the Guru in unmistakable terms. Sikhs outside India did not lag behind. They came to India in large numbers to pay their homage to the Guru and to express their solidarity with the Panth as well as their desire for a glorious future as Sikhs in the international community. This is indeed a favourable ground situation for any programme aimed at future glory of the Panth.

We have demonstrated to the World that Sikhs believe in Sabad Guru, and as such Guru Granth Sahib is our Guru Eternal, so that there is no place for *dehdbhari* Gurus in Sikh religion. It is possible and necessary to build on this foundation the edifice of a great future. We should not sit back gloating over the pomp and show of celebrations. The enthusiasm of the masses should be directed into constructive channels through meaningful programmes. Of paramount importance is the need for sharing the message of Guru Granth Sahib with the rest of the world. This is necessary for salvation of mankind as well as in our own interest. For, we cannot expect an honorable place for us, unless other people understand us and know what we stand for or what Guru Granth teaches.

Volumes have been written on Guru Granth Sahib. Our belief that it is God's own Word is unshakeable. Nobody can fathom fully the depth and extent of knowledge, guidance and inspiration it confers, and the ecstasy of its hymns. Guru Arjun Dev has, however, himself summed up its contents in the *Mundavani* at the end of the Volume thus :

*"In the platter (of this Book) are placed three things – Truth, Contentment and Wisdom.  
And also this life-giving nectar, Naam of the Lord,  
that sustains us all.  
He who tastes this fare and relishes it, is wholly fulfilled.  
This thing one cannot forsake: so keep thou it in the mind.  
For, (through it) one swims across the darkness of existence and realizes  
the expanse of God"\**

Emphasis on truth in the hymns is too obvious to be missed. Mere knowledge (*gyan*) of truth is not enough. It has to be practised in life. Contentment is necessary for happiness. Otherwise one continues to indulge in endless pursuits of worldly riches, amassing wealth through unethical means, grabbing what belongs to others. This does not satisfy one's hunger for more and more. Greed is unsatiable,

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\* ਬਾਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਤਿੰਨਿ ਵਸਤੁ ਪਈਓ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੋ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਾ ਪਇਓ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਭਸੁ ਅਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਖਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭੁੰਢੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਖੁ ਉਚਿ ਧਾਰੋ ॥  
ਤਮ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਚਰਨ ਲਗਿ ਤਰੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਸਾਰੋ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1429)

and leads to misery. It is only contentment that yields satisfaction. The third thing that the Granth offers is Wisdom, an insight into the nature of the universe, and a worldview. The Guru's approach is positive. The world is real; it is not a dream. Nor is it a place to receive punishment for sins committed in a previous birth. It is a place created by God for man to practise *dharma* or righteousness. The human birth is an opportunity to meet the Lord who is immanent in the universe, indicating His love for His creation. So, altruistic deeds or service of mankind without distinction of caste, creed, colour or country is the way to please Him. He is the benevolent Father, and we are all His children, and hence equal. There are no chosen and no condemned people; all are equal before Him. He dispenses justice to all. Equality and justice have to be defended as God's Will. That is the only way to end strife in the world and to ensure lasting peace and happiness in the world.

The Granth Sahib repeatedly lays stress on the above values, and it is incumbent upon us to share these values with our fellow human beings across the world. Celebrations of the *shatabadi* would be meaningless unless we take some steps in this direction. Some of these could be :

- a) Setting up an Institute of Advanced Studies in Sikhism to interpret and conduct research on Gurbani and Sikh history, to translate the *bani* in various Indian and international languages, and to publish suitable literature.
- b) To set up a cadre of highly qualified missionaries to carry the message of the Granth to all parts of the world.
- c) A special campaign to wean Sikh youth from apostatic trends.
- d) Extensive use of electronic media. A 24-hour TV Channel is a must for this purpose.
- e) A literacy campaign to eliminate illiteracy completely by 2008 when we celebrate the tercentennial of the anointment of Guru Granth Sahib.

In the end, we must repeat what we have been stressing all along, that the above programmes and other long-term ambitions of the Panth can only be realized through an Apex Body of the Panth with representatives from all parts of the world and from all Sikh organizations. People look to the SGPC in all matters concerning

Sikhs. This responsibility will also have to be discharged by the SGPC. The Institute Of Sikh Studies has been actively campaigning for it. Support from other Sikh organizations in India as well as abroad will expedite its setting up. This will facilitate sharing (*vand chhakna*) of the spiritual food the Guru has bequeathed to us on the holy platter, with the entire mankind.

□

*Sikhism is a Universal world Faith, a message for all men. This is amply illustrated in the writings of the Gurus. Sikhs must cease to think of their faith as just another good religion and must begin to think in terms of Sikhism being the religion for this New Age... The religion preached by Guru Nanak is the faith of the New Age. It completely supplants and fulfils all the former dispensations of older religions. Books must be written proving this. The other religions contain the truth, but Sikhism contains the fullness of truth.*

*... Sri Guru Granth Sahib of all the world religious scriptures, alone states that there are innumerable worlds and universes other than our own. The previous scriptures were all concerned only with this world and its spiritual counterpart. To imply that they spoke of other worlds as does Sri Guru Granth Sahib, is to stretch their obvious meanings out of context. The Sikh religion is truly the answer to the problems of the modern man.*

– Rev H L Bradshaw

## THE RELIGION OF THE SABAD GURU\*

KHARAK SINGH

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### INTRODUCTION

Compilation of *Gurbani* in 1604 by Guru Arjun Dev and later, its anointment as Guru Eternal of the Sikhs represent a great leap in the development of religious thought or spiritual progress of mankind.

Rudiments of religion can be traced even in the prehistoric man in the form of worship of natural forces like winds, fire, clouds, etc., or geographical features like mountains, rivers, seas, or animals like snakes, which inspired fear or wonder. Such forms of worship have survived upto this day, and are widespread in large tribal areas of the world. Before the idea of one God as creator of the universe gained currency, religion passed through several intermediary stages represented by worship of innumerable gods believed to look after their devotees with powers attributed to them. Their statues appeared, leading to idol worship which persists even today.

Then came prophets with message from God. They denounced idols as His rivals. The prophets never claimed Godhead for themselves. They were content to be His messengers. Their followers, accustomed to idol worship, however, confused / identified their prophets with God Himself, and with some people God acquired a human or anthropomorphic form, to be realised through personal intervention of particular prophets in favour of their own followers alone.

It was Guru Nanak who propounded the revolutionary idea that

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*sabad* or God's word (of course received through a prophet) was the real 'guru', and not any individual or his body, that brought the message.

Every religious/spiritual system addresses some fundamental issues, mostly theological in character. Views on these issues determine its character and give it a distinct identity. The more important among the issues are :

1. The concept of God
2. Metaphysical assumptions
3. Nature of the world
4. View on life
5. Goal of life
6. The spiritual discipline/Methodology
7. Role of a mystic after achievement of goal
8. Attitude towards social and political life

The above issues find a comprehensive treatment in the *bani* or the *sabad* enshrined in the 1430 pages of Guru Granth Sahib (GGS). The views expressed therein are very briefly reproduced in the following paragraphs :

#### **CONCEPT OF GOD**

The creedal statement (*Mul Mantra*) with which Guru Granth Sahib opens, lists some of the major attributes of God: "The Sole One, Self-existent and Immanent, the Creator Person, Without Fear, Without Enmity, the Timeless One, the Unincarnated, Self-created and Enlightener."<sup>1</sup> The system is uncompromisingly monotheistic, and rejects the idea of any other gods or goddesses. The Guru asserts, "My God is only One. He is the only One. He is the only One. Brother, He is the only One."<sup>2</sup> God never takes birth nor changes. The theory of incarnation of God is rejected. The universe is His creation. It is not His emanation, nor is it identical with Him.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Transcendent and Immanent***

God is transcendent. He is also immanent in His creation. "Even before creation He permeated the void".<sup>4</sup> He is beyond space and time. It is impossible to assess His limits through human logic with its spacio-temporal limitations. "He is Infinite, Unfathomable, Unknowable, Indescribable, Ineffable and Immeasurable by human categories of thought and perception. ...The Guru calls Him wondrous,

‘the wonder of wonders’. He is beyond description and comprehension or ‘wholly other’ as described by Otto. The mind alone can never know Him.”<sup>5</sup>

The Guru profusely refers to the immanent aspect of God, which is also described as His Will that directs the universe, His Word that informs the universe and His *Naam* that not only creates the entire universe, but sustains and governs it<sup>6</sup> :

- ‘God creates the universe, takes His abode in it and sustains it.’<sup>7</sup>
- ‘He that permeates all hearts, is transcendent too’<sup>8</sup>
- ‘He pervades the body, and is yet detached’.<sup>9</sup>
- ‘He is in the midst of all, and is yet distinct’<sup>10</sup>
- ‘Having created the world, He stands in the midst of it, and is separate too’<sup>11</sup>

God’s immanence indicates His love for His Creation. “On the one hand, it gives relevance, authenticity, direction and sanction to the entire moral and spiritual life of man and his institutions and goals. On the other hand, it emphasizes God’s capacity for revelation, His nearness to man, and His deep and abiding interest in the world.”<sup>12</sup>

### ***Attributes of God***

God has been described as the ‘Ocean of attributes, values and virtues.’ He has been addressed in the *bani* as Father, Mother, Brother, Enlightener, Protector, Shelter of the shelterless, with all the love and benevolence attending these relationships.<sup>13</sup> He is referred to as Helper of the poor and the weak, as well as Destroyer of the evil.<sup>14</sup> He is also described as Succour of the succourless, Eyes to the blind, Riches to the poor, and Ocean of virtues.<sup>15</sup>

### ***God has a Will***

God’s Will is also referred to as *hukam* or *raza*. Everything happens within the ambit of His Will.<sup>16</sup> His Will is altruistic and is exercised to give the world an aim.

### ***Grace***

In *Gurbani*, God has been called gracious. It has been repeatedly mentioned that all final approval of man is an act of God’s Grace. “O Nanak, intellect alone is of no avail; one is approved only by His Grace.”<sup>17</sup> His Grace is limitless, and He is ever willing to shower it on those who aspire to it. An implication of Grace is that God’s Will is free, and is not subject to any empirical laws. “In addition, it also

stresses the love and benevolence of God towards man and the universe which are different from Him. For, a gracious being can bestow His Grace only on something other than Himself.”<sup>18</sup>

### ***God has a Personality***

Guru Granth refers to God as a Person, so that He is not just a vague concept or a law. There is lengthy hymn under the title *So Purukh* (That Person) in which He is described as a Person, pure, fathomless and limitless.<sup>19</sup> “A God of Will, Freedom, Grace and Attributes, or the Creator, Controller and Director of universe, can be conceived only in terms of a personality. The emphasis on prayer and love towards God is there in almost all the hymns of the Guru Granth. This can only mean that God is a Being with a Personality to whom prayer can be directed, and devotion and love expressed. Evidently, this personality aspect of God is operative only in relation to the world. Nor is a God of Personality conceived in terms of the limited personality of man, who is a finite being in a becoming universe.”<sup>20</sup>

### **METAPHYSICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

Unlike some systems like Yoga, Sankhya and Jainism which believe in two kinds of Reality, material and spiritual, the Guru’s religion believes strictly in only One Reality, God. The theology of Sikhism is monotheistic: Hymns quoted in the earlier section clearly show the Creator–creation relationship between One Sole God and His creation — man. “The universe is not accepted as His emanation or extension. God is not the material cause of the world. Nor is separate and independent existence of matter accepted in any form. ...The Gurus have clearly emphasized the transcendental character of God by saying that the world was created in time and space. The transcendental God has been there even while the world was uncreated and God’s immanent character was unexpressed. The expression of *Naam* was prior to the creation of the universe. “God manifested Himself into *Naam*, and at the second place the world was created.”<sup>21</sup>

### **NATURE OF THE WORLD**

Unlike earlier religious traditions in India which believed the world to be illusory, the Guru holds that the world is real. There are numerous verses in the GGS to affirm this belief. Some of these may be reproduced below :



- “True is He, True is His creation.”<sup>22</sup>
- “True are Thy worlds and Thy universes.  
True are the forms Thou createst.  
True are Thy deeds.  
... True and holy is Thy creative might.  
... This world is the abode of the True One,  
He resides in it.”<sup>23</sup>
- “The body is the temple of God, created by Himself. Within it  
He resides.”<sup>24</sup>
- “Nanak, the whole world is in bloom like a garden.”<sup>25</sup>

Not only the earth, everything on it is a blessing by God. “Human birth is a precious privilege.”<sup>26</sup> “Earth is the true abode of righteousness.”<sup>27</sup> “Body is the horse on which one rides to God.”<sup>28</sup> These verses and many more in Guru Granth Sahib affirm the view that the world is not an illusion; it is real.

#### VIEW ON LIFE

While some religious systems, particularly the ascetic ones, view life as a bondage, a suffering or a punishment for past sins, the Guru takes an opposite view. Human life is regarded as an opportunity to meet the Lord.<sup>29</sup> It is an opportunity to do noble deeds which form the basis for final assessment. It has been repeatedly stressed that human birth is extremely rare and may not be available again, and that it should not be allowed to go in vain.<sup>30</sup>

#### GOAL OF LIFE

In the Guru Granth Sahib, the following doctrines have been repeatedly emphasized :

- a) Righteous deeds are the basis of final assessment of man. “Deeds determine whether one is close to or far from God”.<sup>31</sup> “With God only the deeds one does in this world, count.”<sup>32</sup>
- b) Mere knowledge (*gyan*) of Truth is not enough. It has to be practised in life. “Truth is higher than everything. Higher still is truthful living”.<sup>33</sup>
- c) To the specific question : “How to become a *sachiana* and how to demolish the dividing wall of falsehood”, the Guru answers : “By carrying out the Will of God.”<sup>34</sup>
- d) Man is born self-centered. He suffers from *haumen*. His activities

under its influence are the cause of all evils, social or individual. One should shed *haumen* to become a *gurmukh* or a God-centered man with a new consciousness inculcating all the virtues attributed to God.

- e) Link with *Naam*: There is so much emphasis on *Naam* in *Gurbani*, that Sikh religion is often called *Naam Marg*. *Naam* expresses God Himself in His immanent form. “He reaches the highest state whom God benevolently yokes to his *Naam*”<sup>35</sup> Hence the prayer, “Pray, link me to God”<sup>36</sup>

From the above, it should be clear that the ideal or goal of man should be to become a *sachara* (abode of truth) or *gurmukh* imbued with *Naam*, attuned to the His Will, carrying it out as His instrument. Since His Will is creative and altruistic, the *gurmukh* engages continuously in altruistic deeds and service of his fellow beings. Liberating himself from *haumen*, he proceeds to liberate others likewise.<sup>37</sup> This is all out of love for His lotus feet.<sup>38</sup>

He also does not seek merger with God in the sense of *nirvaan*, which involves loss of identity and amounts to anti-creative annihilation or a kind of spiritual suicide.

To sum up, the *gurmukh* or the ideal man according to the Guru has the following characteristics<sup>39</sup> :

- a) He is godly and has all His virtues and no *haumen*.
- b) He carries out God’s Will, as His instrument.
- c) He is the servant of God and man.
- d) He partakes actively in all fields of life.
- e) He aims to make all others God-oriented.

#### THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

In the discipline prescribed for attaining the status of *gurmukh*, the Guru lays stress on company of God-oriented persons, or *sadh sangat*, moral life, service of man, besides prayer and remembrance of God. This discipline is to be practised not as an ascetic, but leading a normal householder’s life. In fact, asceticism is decried as escapism and parasitism. The popular formula ‘*Naam japo, kirat karo, vand chhako*’ conveys the essence of the Guru’s discipline. Similarly, *Naam Daan Ishnan* is another common expression or a household phrase among followers of the Guru. While *Naam* refers to constant remembrance

of God, *daan* means charity or altruistic deeds, and *ishnan* signifies purity of body and mind through moral conduct.

Company (*sangat*) of *gurmukh* is of inestimable value in the spiritual effort of man, to serve as a model and guide, and to provide constant inspiration and strength. "Just as castor plant imbibes the fragrance of the *chandani* tree in its company, the fallen are emancipated by the saints."<sup>40</sup> "Saith Nanak : Thus shall you have joy here, and your face be radiant in the hereafter : This blessing in company of the holy is obtained."<sup>41</sup>

Exemplary moral conduct is an indispensable constituent of the discipline for spiritual progress. Guru Granth Sahib is replete with tips on morality of highest level. A seeker never inflicts pain on others. His guiding forces are love, and spirit of service and sacrifice.

*Naam japna* includes, meditation in early ambrosial hours of the morning, recitation of *nitnem banis*, listening to and/or participation in *Gurbani kirtan*, and remembering God all the time. In fact, it amounts to living in the consciousness of His presence. The seeker must remember that while the above discipline is necessary, the ultimate blessing will come from His Grace, when one sheds his ego. He must, therefore, constantly pray in all humility as a part of the discipline.

#### ROLE OF A MYSTIC AFTER ACHIEVEMENT OF GOAL

According to the Gurus' theory of evolution, the life of a Sikh is march from the *manmukh* (self-centered) stage to *gurmukh* (God-centered). When through practice of the prescribed discipline one reaches the *gurmukh* or *jiwan mukta* stage, his role is not over, as would be the case if one aspires for *moksha* or *nirvaan*. The ideal for the Guru's followers is "Liberation for oneself and liberation for all".<sup>42</sup>

So, the *gurmukh* or the mystic on the Guru's path continues his altruistic activities in the service of humanity.<sup>43</sup>

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Guru's religion is a whole-life religion and aims at full development of the individual as well as society, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. The Guru rejects the dichotomy of spiritual and temporal life, and stresses the primacy of spiritual values in temporal activities. Guru's follower is a householder, an active participant in social life, a saint as well as a soldier ever ready to fight for justice and a righteous cause. Guru's followers are expected to

carry out the Will of God through altruistic deeds, which is not possible in isolation of an ascetic. They are enjoined upon to participate fully in social and political activities.

### **SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE GURU'S SYSTEM**

Besides the above, there are some other features and values in the Guru's system that need to be highlighted. Sikhism is a life-affirming faith with a positive attitude towards the world. It is a religion of activism, noble actions, and altruistic deeds. It is a religion of hope and optimism with rich traditions of *Charhdi Kala* or ever-buoyant spirits. Pacifism and pessimism have no place in Sikh thought. Sikh discipline is a conscious effort to live in harmony with nature and to carry out the altruistic Divine Will. Some special features of the Guru's system are :

#### ***Universalism***

The Guru's teachings are universal in the broadest sense. These are applicable and valid in all situations — social, political, or geographical and at all times. Stress is only on lasting or eternal values, with freedom to adjust to change in environment within the framework of Laws of nature or Lord's *Hukam*.

#### ***Brotherhood of Mankind***

The Guru preaches : "There is one Father : We are all His children." Guru Gobind Singh again affirmed : "Recognise ye all mankind as one race." Thus, there is no place for casteism in the Khalsa value system, like Khatris, Brahmins, Shudras, or Vaishas. All are subject to the same religious discipline, and are equally entitled to pursuit of religion and liberation. There are no privileged classes, nations or races, or 'chosen ones' on the basis of birth. This is a corollary of the doctrine of Fatherhood of God.

#### ***Equality and Justice***

No discrimination is permitted on the basis of caste, colour, creed, or gender. Guru's follower is enjoined to defend justice even with his life, if necessary. Exploitation in any form, religious, political, social, or economic is condemned. The institutions of *dharamsal*, *sangat* and *pangat* introduced by the Gurus to ensure perfect equality are firmly established among followers of the Guru.

#### ***Freedom***

Guru demolishes all barriers in the way of progress of man,

whether these were social, political, or religious. Guru Gobind Singh reaffirmed these freedoms at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, through his *Nash* doctrine :

- i. *Dharam Nash* : freedom from restrictions of the *varan asbaram dharma*.
- ii. *Karam Nash* : freedom from rituals of *Karam-Kand*.
- iii. *Bharam Nash* : freedom from superstition.
- iv. *Kul Nash* : freedom from vanity or limitations associated with birth or lineage.
- v. *Krit Nash* : freedom from limitations on choice of occupation.

### ***Life-Affirmation***

In contrast to earlier life-negating systems, the Guru preaches a positive approach to life aimed at a full and balanced development of the individual as well as society.

“Through the Master is the way of living perfected,  
And in a life of smiling playfulness and enjoyment of wear and food,  
Is attained liberation.”<sup>44</sup>  
“My self ! in joy abide by endeavouring  
And working (in the way of God).  
By meditation obtain union with the Lord.  
Thus, saith Nanak, shall thy anxiety be removed.”<sup>45</sup>

### ***Status of Women***

The Guru's concept of equality for women can never be surpassed. “How can she be considered inferior, when she gives birth to kings?”, He asks.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Dignity, Self-respect, and Honour***

Life is a great gift of God. It should not be debased. It should be lived with honour. Says the Guru about a person without honour :

“Such a one, if alive, in ignominy lives;  
All his gains are illegitimate.”<sup>47</sup>  
“What is the value of worship without honour,  
Self-restraint without purity,  
And the sacred thread without continence ?”<sup>48</sup>

### ***Miri-Piri Doctrine***

The Guru's religion is a whole-life religion. It covers all aspects of human life, personal, corporate, social as well as political. The

doctrine enjoins equal attention to both spiritual and temporal domains.

### ***Saint-Soldier Ideal***

The followers of the Guru are expected to be saints as well as soldiers. This is clear from the definition of a warrior given in the GGS :

“In this age such alone are designated as true heroes,  
As in love of the Lord are dyed.”<sup>49</sup>  
“The true hero is one who fights in defence of the humble;  
Is cut limb after limb, and flees not the field”.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Oecumenism***

The Guru claims no exclusive authority to liberation, and prays :

“The world is aflame. Shower thy Grace,  
And save it through whatever door it be possible.”<sup>51</sup>

The Guru recognises that there could be different doors for entry into God’s Court/Kingdom. Anybody who follows the spirit of true religion can earn His closeness. Label or the Name of his denomination does not matter. One’s deeds will decide one’s acceptance or rejection in His Court. Multi-culturism is inherent in Sikh values. Sikhs do not merely tolerate other cultures and religious traditions, they have genuine respect for them.

### **GURU’S VALUES AND THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

The twentieth century has seen two World Wars besides numerous local wars. Clash of national interests among European colonial powers was the cause of the First World War. The Second World War was a clash of ideologies between democratic and fascist forces. This was followed by a prolonged cold-war between the ‘free world’ and ‘communist regimentation’. The latter seems to have suffered a setback for the time being due to collapse of the Soviet Union. However, with success in China it continues to be a force to reckon with. World powers now appear to be aligning on the broader basis of civilizations. A possible Third World War will be a clash of civilizations, according to Huntington.<sup>52</sup> With nuclear weapons of destruction now available, this war can be disastrous beyond imagination. It could be the end of civilisation, since there may be no winners.

The only way to avert this impending catastrophe is universal

acceptance of multi-culturism and respect for diverse cultures. Sikhism is one religion that has always cherished these values. That is why Sikhs have migrated to all parts of the world and have been accepted as full partners in all societies. As such it must be increasingly understood by Sikhs themselves as well as others that Sikhism owes a major role to the world in bringing about an understanding among civilizations, so necessary to avert the threat of a third world war.

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#### REFERENCES

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- 2 Ibid., p. 350 : ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥
- 3 Daljeet Singh : *Sikhism – A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, p. 185.
- 4 GGS, p. 940 : ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਕਬੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਲੀਆ ॥
- 5 Daljeet Singh : *op. cit.*, pp. 187-88.
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## GURU GRANTH – THE VISIBLE BODY OF THE GURU\*

SIRDAR KAPUR SINGH

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The true facts are that the second Sikh pontiff, Guru Angad (1504-1552), formed the nucleus of the book, now called, Guru Granth Sahib, by collecting in one manuscript the revelations of Guru Nanak, which existed in the form of note-books, *pothis*, written by Guru Nanak himself. That these manuscripts were written in, what are now called, Gurmukhi characters by Guru Nanak himself is hardly in doubt, for these characters are an improved form of an ancient script, which was then current in the plains of the Punjab, and which in its evolution, can directly be traced back to the ancient Brahmi and Aramaic scripts. These scripts themselves are believed by some scholars to be direct evolutions from the proto-Indian 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC Mohenjodaro script. “Indeed, the entire Brahmi alphabet is shown to be derived from the script of Mohenjodaro and Harrapa. It is also shown that those scholars were not mistaken who connected Brahmi with South Semitic and Phoenician scripts. For, there is much evidence to show that these also were derived from the script of Mohenjodaro and Harrapa.”<sup>1</sup>

This script is mentioned by the name of Siddhamatrika by the Arab historian, Abu Raihan Mohamed Alberuni (d. 1048) in his *Tabquiquat-Hind*, as the script which was then, as in the previous centuries, the main script of culture and education from Peshawar to Banaras, and from Sindh to Kashmir, the precise area, which now appears to be the area of the Mohenjodaro civilisation from *circa* 3500 BC to *circa* 1500 BC. The present Devnagri script is a form of this Siddhamatrika, taking its name from the Ujjain city of medieval Central

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Excerpts sent by Gurbax Singh Paonta, HP

India, which was given the honorific surname of Devnagar, by the Brahmins, on account of the generous royal endowments made there, for their benefit. Since the influence of the Siddhas, the patriarchs of the *Kalchakra* or *Vajrayana* form of Mahayan Buddhism, was no longer supreme in Northern India by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Guru Angad gave this script, as improved upon by Guru Nanak, the name of Gurmukhi, that which is adopted and improved upon, by Guru Angad's guru, Guru Nanak. It is these facts, which are interpreted by various writers, as that the Gurmukhi characters were invented by Guru Nanak,<sup>2</sup> or, as is the popular impression, that they were invented by Guru Angad himself. It was the adoption of the Gurmukhi characters which "reminded those who employed them of their duty towards their Guru and constantly kept alive in their minds the consciousness that they were something distinct from the common mass of the Hindus."<sup>3</sup>

To this nucleus of the *Granth*, as prepared by Guru Angad, his successor, Guru Amar Dass (1479-1574) added considerable material. But it was the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjun (1563-1606) who composed the major corpus of the *Granth*, as it now exists, and compiled the Volume in 1604 after a stupendous labour of almost ten years. He then formally installed it in the central Sikh Temple at Amritsar after adding the following epilogue to it :

"Three topics are discussed in this Book —

The Truth, the Human concord with the Truth, and the Discriminatory Wisdom which leads to this Concord. The Principle of these topics is the ever-abiding *Naam* of God, the All Ground. Whosoever shall understand and assimilate it, shall be saved. It is of no passing, but is of perennial interest to Mankind, to be taken by them to heart, with undying devotion."<sup>4</sup>

Henceforth, Guru Arjun and his successors always took a lower seat for themselves, than the Book, whenever the two happened to be together.

Many more copies, no doubt, were made of this re-edited *Granth*, and it was before one such copy at Nanded, Deccan in 1708 that Guru Gobind Singh made the following declaration, which ever since is recited at the conclusion of every congregational prayer on all occasions of public worship by the Sikhs :

"The Order of the Khalsa was established as per the Command of God. This is now the commandment to all the Sikhs to accept the *Granth* as the Guru."<sup>5</sup>

Ever since, the Sikhs speak of Guru Panth and Guru Granth in the same breath, in whom the joint sovereignty of this as well as the other world rests till the end of Time. Every Sikh temple has the Guru Granth Sahib opened in its congregational hall, which is arranged as an Oriental throne room. Likewise, every Sikh house of consequence has in it, set apart a private chapel, which is arranged in the fashion of a throne. On every occasion, where the Sikhs as such gather, and meet for deliberations, prayer or a function, a throne with the Guru Granth Sahib installed on it, must be arranged. The Guru Granth Sahib on all such occasions, is wrapped and dressed in brocades, silks and other precious clothes symbolic of royalty, and when an attendant sits or stands behind the throne with the royal symbol of *chauri*, a yak tail, in hand, with five or more Sikhs before the throne, the visible Body of the Guru is recognised as present there. Every Sikh who enters the Presence, must present a *naṣar*, a donation of money or flowers or any other such customary offering before the throne. This is in accordance with ancient oriental customs, and he/she must make an obeisance in recognition of the Presence of “the visible Body of the Guru.” Every body must behave with due decorum in the throne room, and as a rule, the main entrance of such a room or place is guarded by two or more attendants with silver or golden staffs in hands, and inside the room, upto five able bodied, properly dressed Sikhs with drawn swords, are to be in attendance, on all formal occasions.

All this ceremonious paraphernalia are the usual symbols of royalty, enjoying sovereign powers, familiar to the East from time immemorial and in this case also, it is intended to indicate no more. The whole scene and ceremonious atmosphere and conduct are scrupulously designed to indicate to all and sundry that the Order of the Khalsa claims to be sovereign, *sui generis*. He who barter away this sovereignty, is a traitor, and he who assumes it instead, is a usurper. To infer from this anything different, as many have done, such as, that the Sikhs ‘worship’ their sacred book, or that the Sikhs are bibliolaters, is wholly unwarranted and misconceived.

What is the meaning of the declaration that ‘the *Granth* is the Guru’, the very contents of the *Granth* bear testimony to this?’

That it was no new doctrine which Guru Gobind Singh propounded is clear. In the *Granth* itself, the doctrine is repeatedly laid down and reiterated that, “the Revelation is the Guru, and the Guru is the Revelation”, and that “whosoever shall accept the

Revelation of the Guru, shall behold the Guru himself.”<sup>6</sup> The Sikhs are bidden to “accept the Revelation of the true Guru as true forever and forever, for God Himself maketh the Guru utter it.”<sup>7</sup> It is explained that, “the Revelation of the Guru is the Light of the World; through it God’s grace descendeth into the human soul”,<sup>8</sup>

In explaining the sense of the *sabad*, adopted therein, the Guru Granth Sahib avers that *sabad* is that essence of things by understanding which man comprehends the truth and thus becomes one with Truth. This *sabad*, the secret Light, is dormant in the heart of every human being. It can be made manifest through a severe discipline of “furnace of Self-control, goldsmith of Patience, the anvil of Intellect, the tools of true Science, the ignition of Fear of God, fire of Suffering and Asceticism, and in the receptacle of Love, prepared this Nectar everlasting. In such a true Mint, the coin of the *sabad* is thus struck. Nanak, (adds), the final Beatitude is through Grace.”<sup>9</sup> “He in whom this Light is fully manifest is the Guru.”<sup>10</sup> “Such a man is capable of helping others in discernment of this Light within themselves.”<sup>11</sup> The mortal human body is not to be deemed as the Guru; it is the Light within him, that is the Guru. It is “the *sabad* that is the Guru, the Guide, the Mystery profound and inscrutable and it is the *sabad*, the absence of which results in spiritual confusion of the world.”<sup>12</sup> This *sabad*, the Light, is not variegated, contingent upon age and clime; “it is one, for God is one and all that there is, proceeds from God.”<sup>13</sup> “The search and discernment of this *sabad* is the only effort worth making for man in this world; all else is waste and weariness”<sup>14</sup> This *sabad* is the subject explained in the revelations of the Sikh Gurus, which Guru Arjun compiled in the first corpus of the Guru Granth Sahib. “It is a treasure compared with which all the precious stones of the earth are worthless. Its worth cannot be computed, and it is never exhausted. Let all men freely draw upon and expend it, for the more it is used, ampler it grows.”<sup>15</sup>

When in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) pointedly stressed the temporal and spiritual aspects of the Sikh Way of life, simultaneously, the question arose of having a portrait of the Guru painted in his capacity as the spiritual and secular head of the community. The Guru then once again made it clear that the mortal frame of the Guru had no peculiar sanctity attached to it, and that the Guru is the *sabad*, the Divine Light that is manifest in his heart and which he can communicate to mankind. “The *sabad* as revealed by the Guru is the only authentic portrait of the

Guru,”<sup>16</sup> declared Bhai Gurdas (c. 1539-1637), an ardent preacher and interpreter of Sikhism.

The Guru's Word, his Revelations, is recorded in Guru Granth Sahib, and the Guru Granth, therefore, is the *sabad*, the Testament. This Testament is the Guru; there is, and there never was, any other Guru. This is the Sikh doctrine, to which Guru Gobind Singh added nothing when he established the condominium of the Guru Panth and Guru Granth. Instead of appointing an individual successor to himself, he appointed the collective of the Order of the Khalsa for the future. He formally reiterated and recognised the true status of the Granth, which was always admitted, and never denied by his predecessors. Guru Granth Sahib contains a statement and exegesis of the Sikh doctrine concerning God, His nature, the Man and his relation to God, which later covers man's relation to his fellow men and other creatures. It contains perennial philosophy, uncontaminated by temporal and secular matters. It is not a code of ethical conduct or social organisation like the Semitic scriptures, though it strictly postulates a social context for practice of religion. It also enjoins strict, unexceptional and high pitched ethical conduct, unmodified by any considerations of expediency of self-interest, and uncompromising on matters of principle.<sup>17</sup>

It asserts again and again that there is no religious life on this earth, divorced from ethical conduct.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Sikhism is a fiercely ethical religion, unlike Hinduism, whose “deities are not identified with moral law and the saint is above that law.”<sup>19</sup> Nor, is it sectarian laying down any metaphysical propositions in support of the practices of a sect or a religion. What it says is of universal import; it must be accepted, or may be rejected — at one's own peril. There is no other claim that this Book makes, and there is no higher claim that any Revelation or Testament can make.

This status of the Guru Granth Sahib has remained unaffected through-out; only the temporal direction of human affairs was given a collegial and collective basis by Guru Gobind Singh.

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The post-partition Hindu-Sikh estrangement which has now, (August 1956), gradually crystalised around the question of the Gurmukhi script, which the Hindus in the Punjab, ably led by the learned Doctor Gokal Chand Narang himself, repudiate with such violent passion, becomes more comprehensible, in the light of this assessment of the implications of the use of Gurmukhi script by the Sikhs in the past.
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  5. ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ ਤਬੈ ਚਲਾਇਓ ਪੰਥ ॥ ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗਰੰਥ ॥
  6. ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ, ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ  
ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ, ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 982)
  7. ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖਹੁ  
ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਵਾਏ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 308)
  8. ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ, ਕਰਮਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਏ ॥
  9. ਜਤੁ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ ॥  
ਭਉ ਖਲਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥ ਭਾਂਡਾ ਭਾਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤਿਤੁ ਢਾਲਿ ॥  
ਘੜੀਐ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 8)
  10. ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਬਿੰਦੇ ਸੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕਥਾ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1264)
  11. ਸਤਿਪੁਰਖੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ॥  
ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਿਖੁ ਉਧਰੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 286)
  12. ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਾ, ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਗ ਬਉਰਾਨੰ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 635)
  13. ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1334)
  14. ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਹੈ ਸਾਰ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1342)
  15. ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥ ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥  
ਰਤਨ ਲਾਲ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕਛੂ ਨਾ ਮੋਲੁ ॥ ਭਰੇ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਅਖੂਟ ਅਤੋਲ ॥  
ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 186)
  16. ਗੁਰ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ ੨੪-੧੧-੩ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ
  17. a) ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਿਖ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਰਹਸੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਜੀਅੜੇ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੀ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 154)
  - b) ਸੋਈ ਕੰਮੁ ਕਮਾਇ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖੁ ਉਜਲਾ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 397)
  - c) ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੁਚੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਉਠਾਵਹਿ ਭਾਰੇ ॥  
ਤੂੰ ਕਾਇਆ ਮੈਂ ਰੁਲਦੀ ਦੇਖੀ ਜਿਉ ਧਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਛਾਰੇ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 154)
  18. ਭਣਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ਇਸ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਾਰੀ ॥ (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 599)
  19. Sir Charles Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism I*, XVI.

## ROADMAP OF SABAD GURU FOR SELF-REALISATION

BHAGWANT SINGH\*

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Ever since I was graced to understand the magnificent teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, I have often wondered whether we have really imbibed them or even tried to imbibe them. My belief is that Guru Gobind Singh's injunction for our perpetual allegiance to our perpetual Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, has been respected by all of us, but the spirit of the injunction has not been understood. The holy Scripture is indeed our perpetual Guru and we are required to show extreme reverence, utmost humility and respectful presence. What has either escaped our attention or what we have deliberately ignored or what the ever-bleeding *maya* and the splendor of the worldly excitement has diverted our attitudes, is the fact that our Guru is neither the holy book nor its external regalia (which, of course, gives the scripture exalted royalty), but our real Guru is the *Sabad*, the Word, the message, the command as set out in various hymns of Guru Granth Sahib. Because of this hiatus between our external devotion and internal alienation, we have failed to reach the heights of *Gurmukh* as envisaged, and remain embedded into *karam-kandi bhakti* which Gurus specifically eliminated by drawing us to the all-pervading *Naam* and stating *sabad guru surat dhun chela*.

I find that Guru Granth Sahib is not only the clearest and effective guide for the Sikhs, but also for all humanity. In fact, every word that I ponder over, every hymn that I sing, every concept that I learn from our Guru, represents the authenticity of Guru's love and grace. Let me share with the readers five distinct messages that reach my heart:

1. Not only is every word true and every command everlasting, but

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\* Tapovan, Amravati, 444 602 (Maharashtra)

- a devotee can experience the truth in his own life.
2. The Guru governs all aspects of man's life, both spiritual and temporal, and the follower of Guru's commands can never go wrong. Indeed, the devotee is required to live spiritually even when engaged in the mundane affairs of life.
  3. Humility is the core point. The easiest way to enter the *ashram* of the Guru's feet is to surrender completely, in Guru's words : *jeevatiyan mar rahiye*.
  4. The devotee is required to have full faith in the Guru's word, the efficacy of Guru's protection and Guru's power of guiding force.
  5. One must not have blind faith, but a devoted faith in obedience to the commands in Guru Granth Sahib. There is no virtue in *salam-jawab* nor can anyone gain the Guru's love by selective interpretations and clever avoidance of Guru's discipline of *simran* and *seva*.

And, if a devotee responds to the guidance of the Guru, there is a clear roadmap for him/her to reach the loving embrace of God. When I listen to *amritvela kirtan* from Harmandir Sahib every morning and concentrate on the messages being disseminated, I am always enthralled and feel that when Guru's guidance is so simple and clear, why do we get into cumbersome discussions, useless debates, unproductive commentaries on the externals. While I shall discuss other landmarks on the road to devotion, let me share the ecstasy of the roadmap I found in the *shabad, harjan dekhau satgur naini* of Guru Ram Das on p. 800 of Guru Granth Sahib. The original *shabad* can be referred to in the texts, but I discuss it in my own unofficial translation: The *shabad* starts with *khatri brahman sood vaish ko jaape har mantar japaini...*

“Anyone from any of the *varnas*, Khatri, Brahmin, Shudra or Vaish, can recite and meditate on *Hari-mantra*. Worship your *satguru* as God himself and serve Him day in and day out. O men of God, recognize your *satguru* by looking at him with your own eyes. When you recite the *Naam* of the Lord according to Guru's commands, you can get whatever you wish. Remember you can think of so many possibilities, but what will happen is what is destined to happen. Everyone wishes well for himself, but the Lord does what has never crossed our minds. O men of God, get rid of the



dictates of your mind; yes,, indeed this is very difficult. Concentrate on the Lord's *Naam* 24 hours and live in accordance with Guru's commands. My Lord, my thoughts or wisdom is under Your control; we are mere instruments on which You play. My Lord, You are the doer of everything and I speak what You dictate me to speak."

The cardinal principles of the Sikh philosophy are complete universality of spirituality, complete equality of man and love of all mankind. Why I call any *shabad* of Guru Granth Sahib a roadmap to the embrace of the Lord, will be clear from the analysis of Guru Ram Das' above *shabad* :

1. We have absolutely no divisions in man on the basis of four *varnas* of Hindus, nor indeed, on any other basis. What unites man in relation to God is his deeds. That is why our Guru insists that one may be Brahmin, Khatri, Shudra or Vaish by caste, it has no relevance to his superiority or inferiority. The worship of God or devotion to Lord is available to everyone.
2. Guru is not an ordinary individual, and it is not given to us to be clever to accept his command. Our Guru wants us to accept the Guru as Lord himself and serve Him day and night. We are fortunate in having the *Sabad* Guru in Guru Granth Sahib which eliminates the slavery of a devotee to a self-proclaimed Baba of a *dera*. The *seva*, day and night, of Guru Granth Sahib means the remembrance of the Lord in every breath and living the message in day-to-day life.
3. What a wonderful concept : looking at the Guru with our own eyes. Unfortunately, we have been thinking that merely the *darshan* of Guru Granth Sahib as a Holy Scripture conveys this meaning. No, what the Guru intends to tell us is that within our hearts we should have the innermost understanding of the Word by remembering Him in accordance with Guru's commands. The Guru assures us that we will have whatever we wish. The wonder of the *Sabad* Guru is that, on the one hand, he makes it clear that we cannot see the Lord with our worldly eyes, because He has no form (*roop na rekh na rang kichch*), and, on the other, he calls upon us to look at Him. It means attachment to Guru's Word in word and deed, which will result in Guru's *darshan* within.

Another thought : The real meaning of what the Guru says could also be represented in what another hymn says :

*prabh dekhadian dukh bhuk gai*  
*dbadhi kau mangan chit na awe*

It means that just when I had the *darshan* of the Lord, I lost all kinds of pain and desires, even the thought of asking for something from the Lord vanished. Where is then the question of getting all that one wishes?

4. There is another exciting thought to meditate on. We make all kinds of efforts, all kinds of labour to attain worldly goods or worldly peace and comfort, but our efforts do not succeed, unless the Lord wants. In fact, what really happens is only what God wants.
5. All of us are our own well-wishers, but the Lord does what He wills and what we have never imagined. All of us should shed our own intellectual concept. True, it is difficult, but once we accept our Guru's wisdom as our final arbiter, we are easily reconciled.
6. To achieve equanimity, concentration on God and devotion to Him enables us to receive and accept Guru's wisdom in all our affairs. In fact, whatever we have is God's gift ; we are like hollow flutes which become active only when God breathes His presence in us. To live in peace and harmony, we willingly accept the Lord's control, because His protection is always beneficial.

Sometimes I helplessly ponder over the fact that the celebration of Guru Granth Sahib's 4<sup>th</sup> centenary chisels in us the desire to go into its history, the modalities of preparation, the arrangement of *ragas*, the skill in the selection of *bhaktas'* contributions, the place of compilation and other such attendant concerns. But I bemoan the fact that we have never made it our aim to concentrate on the everlasting truth of the Masters' Word in building our character and providing to the world, the personification of our principles by personal examples. I have said *ad nauseam* that one Sikh's example of the truth of *Gurbani* in action is far more effective than hundreds of articles, magazines, newspapers and lectures.

I wish to examine on the basis of the following two *shabads* of Guru Arjun, whether we have reached anywhere the position our Guru

envisaged for *Gurmukh* or Khalsa in terms of their dictates. One *shabad* centers on self-annihilation to receive the grace of the Lord. The other highlights the limitless peace and bliss that we can experience. Let us take the *shabad* in which *ardas* is the paramount projection:

The *shabad* begins like this: *gobind jeevan pran-dhan roop.....*, but I continue the whole *shabad* in English translation :

“My Lord, You, indeed, are my life, my heart and soul as also my wealth. For an ignorant entrenched in deep attachment to the world, You are like a lamp in darkness. Your *darshan*, my beloved Lord, is always rewarding and I am enthralled by the beauty of Your lotus feet. I bow to You countless times and, in my mind, offer the fragrant *dhoop*. Having become totally helpless and supportless in the world, I have fallen at Your door and I hold now firmly my only support in You. Lift Your own Nanak out of the worldliness which is like a form of fire.”

When I noted this *shabad* as *bukam* this morning from Guru Granth Sahib, I was embarrassed because in the celebration of our Guru's fourth centenary, I had never thought that what I am required to do is to beg my Guru to grant me the bliss that has been promised in Guru Granth Sahib. At least this morning, my heart went out to the Lord to make determined effort to hold on to His support for all times and my thoughts emerged from within to get closer to His benevolent feet.

1. Baba Farid calls this world *bhoom rangavli* (a colourful earth) in which there is *vasoola bagh* ( a poisonous garden), but then Guru assures us that those who are protected by the Guru come out unscathed. *Farida bhoom rangavli manjh vasoola bagh, jo jan peer navajia tinan anch na laag*. That is how Guru Arjun pleads with the Lord in the above *ardas*- oriented *shabad* to lift him out of the fire of worldliness, because he holds firm the support of the Lord. For us, this support is the acceptance of the dictates of *Gurbani*. I ask myself, do I live my life in accordance with Guru's commands?

2. Have I become completely devoted ? Have I recognized that Guru's word is my lamp in my *moh-maya* darkness? Have I, in other words, committed myself to live *Gurbani* in my day-to-day life?

The Guru's grace is limitless and ceaseless, and the wonder I experienced was that the presence of the Lord lifted me from the quagmire of filthy worldliness to enjoy the warmth of the Guru's word.

But the scintillating experience came when the second *shabad* (which I quote below) seemed to be the answer to the prayer in the first *shabad*.

The second *shabad* begins with *ja kau bhaye gobind sabayee.....*

And I continue its translation:

“The one whom the Lord shows grace is always in peace, equanimity and bliss, and has harmonious relationship with all; he has no problems. The Lord’s devotee seems to be dealing with others but internally remains aloof; he is not influenced by *maya*. With Satguru’s wisdom, he lives ceaselessly in the Lord’s presence. The kind saint is the one, who, with God’s grace, is full of compassion and kindness. Nanak crosses the ocean of life in the company of the devotee, who, with utmost relish and internal ecstasy, sings the praises of the Lord.”

Is there any doubt now that Guru Granth Sahib always provides a roadmap for serene, blissful and ecstatic life, and leads to a life of *peace* through self-realisation? Witness this from *Sukhmani Sahib* :

*Satguru sikh ka halat palat sware*

*Nanak satgur sikh kau jee naal saware.*

The Guru embellishes the life of the Sikh here and here-after.

Says Nanak: Satguru holds the Sikh close to his heart.

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*The religion of the Guru Granth is a universal and practical religion.... The world needs today its message of peace and love.*

– Archer

## GURU GRANTH SAHIB

MADANJIT KAUR\*

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The scripture of the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib is enshrined in a 1430 page volume. It is the Holy Book of the Sikhs and is treated as Guru (Master or Guide) by the Sikh community. There is a growing global awareness of the Sikh scripture. Whether it is USA, Europe or Asia, Guru Granth Sahib is attracting wide interest. Compiled in Gurmukhi script, set in musical modes (*ragas*) and edited by the Fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjun Dev in 1604 AD, Guru Granth Sahib is the most authentic medieval religious text of Northern India. Guru Arjun Dev had compiled and edited the hymns, incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib, in a unique scientific style. The hymns of the Sikh Gurus and the saints are arranged in the Holy Book not according to their composers, but according to thirty one *ragas* (musical measures). All the collections have been recorded in a set pattern with numerals so that no interpolation can be made in the original codification. It is most fortunate that teachings of the Sikh Gurus and the Hindu *bhaktas* and Muslim *fakirs* are preserved in their original form in this scripture. The Gurus whose compositions appear in Guru Granth Sahib have the name of Nanak as their *nom de plume* and their compositions are distinguished by the term *mahalla* (Master) along with their Guruship number. The names of the *bhaktas* and saints are given with their compositions.

The Adi Granth Sahib was installed in Sri Harimandir Sahib on *Bhadon Sudi Ekas, Samvat 1661 BK*. It contains hymns not just of the Sikh Gurus – Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur, but also of *bhaktas*, *bhatts*, and saints like Jaidev, Farid, Nam Dev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Sadhana,

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Beni, Ramanand, Dhanna, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravidas, Bhikhan, Surdas, each from different part of the country, who had composed their devotional hymns in different dialects and languages.

The selection of the text of the scripture of Guru Granth Sahib testifies to Sikh Gurus' ideal vision of the composite culture of India and the message of Guru Granth Sahib is of great relevance to us even today. No religion can live in isolation in the present times and inter-religious dialogue has become imperative. It is the only scripture in the world in which inter-religious dialogue is available. Guru Granth Sahib professes word of divine truth expressed by different holy men. It cuts across religious, linguistic, geographical and cultural boundaries and preaches universal moral values, unity of God, equality of man, protection of human rights and pragmatic spiritual way of living. It's inherent message — welfare of the whole humanity (*sarbat da bhalla*) is an open invitation to mankind to strive for global unity. Contrary to the practice of ancient Indian religious traditions, the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib hold that man might obtain eternal happiness without forsaking his ordinary worldly duties. It recommends harmonious combination of the secular and spiritual components of life as essential basis for attaining salvation. The community life (*sangati jiwan*) and altruism (service) are the pre-requisites of Sikh way of life to attain the status of *Gurmukh* (Guru- oriented man). All the Gurus, Hindu *bhaktas* and Muslim *fakirs*, whose writings find a place in Guru Granth Sahib, emphasise that reunion with the Absolute should be the supreme object of devotion and aspiration.

Guru Granth Sahib is a voluminous scripture. The pride of place is given to *Japji*, a composition of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. *Japji* is one of the most famous soul stirring compositions of Sikh scripture. *Japji* commences with the *Mool Mantra* which also prefaces many other hymns in Guru Granth Sahib in the form of *mangal*, the virtues of God. The *Mool Mantra*, is the basic belief of the fundamental doctrine of the Sikh faith. It explains the attributes of the Supreme Reality. *Japji* is very popular with the Sikhs and non-Sikh devotees. Guru Arjun Dev's composition, *Sukhmani*, also called Psalm of Peace, is another famous text of Guru Granth Sahib. It had been especially composed for solace of the suffering, depressed and heavy laden people, who have lost hope. The recitation of *Sukhmani* invokes a

new outlook in the readers on their adverse situation and inspires them to accept the life situation and will of God (*Hukam*) with humility and peace of mind. It is believed that recitation and listening to *Sukhmani* provides the boon of tranquility and freedom from stress, strain, tension and ailments. All the compositions incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib are equally revered by the Sikhs. It is the sacred book of the Sikhs and from it they obtain consolation, joy, encouragement and will power. Guru Granth Sahib forms the basis of their meditation, understanding of God and world-outlook.

Guru Granth Sahib is not only the scripture, the *Gursabad* (divine Word or instructions) it is the eternal Guru of the Sikhs. The tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh had ordained before his demise that in future, Guru Granth Sahib shall be the Guru of the Sikhs. He installed the Granth Sahib as his successor and then conferred guruship on the scripture at Nanded (Hazoor Sahib) in 1708 AD.

Idol worship has no place in Sikh religion. Guru Granth Sahib is the central object of worship in Sikh gurdwaras (temples). As a Sikh practice, the holy Scripture is installed under a gorgeous canopy on a raised platform in the center of the hall of the Sikh temples. Guru Granth Sahib is the basis and not the object of worship, its importance lies in its teachings. The Sikhs prostrate before their Scripture in reverence to the *Gurbani* (the divine compositions) that it contains and not to the physical form of the Holy Book.

Guru Granth Sahib presents a holistic view of human life. The very compilation, selection of the hymns, arrangements, editing and presentation of the text of the Holy Volume of Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjun Dev is so enormous in comprehension and vision that it is hard to grasp the spirit of the vast knowledge and wisdom that the Guru wanted to give us for peace, harmony, spiritual emancipation and welfare of the whole humanity. In fact, Guru Granth Sahib is the storehouse of higher knowledge and spiritual experience.

The structural formation of the content-matter of the Granth has wonderful aesthetic value. The poetic setting of the hymns has rhythmic excellence of the musical measures - the *ragas*. The projection of the sound-current in the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib are arranged in 31 *Ragas* and their allied *Raginis*. Its musical infrastructure is a powerful methodology of harmonious play of life force, and presents

excellent knowledge of the Infinite. Every verse of the Guru Granth Sahib contains wisdom and truth in perfect melody. The melodious rhythmic projection of the hymns deeply affects the human heart, mind and soul, and enables the devotee to rise to the level of cosmic unity with the Almighty – the Supreme Reality. The Sikhs believe that Guru Granth Sahib is a ship in which the human being can travel across the mortal world to heavenly abode as well as to enjoy the virtues on this earth.

According to the philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib — the Reality is One. It is transcendent. God is the Creator (*Karta*) of the universe. The whole cosmos is under the binding law (*Hukam*) of God. The world is real and every living being has its task. Soul is the light of God. The disciple has to reflect on Guru's teachings and practise them in thought and deed. Devotion and service (*sewa*) attract God's grace (*nadar*). Seeker must live in Will of God (*Raza*), get rid of his ego (*baumai*), practise a virtuous life and worship God's *Naam*. Loving God means loving all human beings. Fellowship with the holy (*sadh sangat*) can link man to God. Absorption in God is the supreme object of human life. Liberation from vices and ignorance (*mukti*) from the cycle of birth and death can be obtained while living in this world.

It is a historical fact that movements of emigration in medieval India had brought about the spread of ideology and language of a particular area far beyond its homeland all through India. The origin of Sikhism took place in a period when India passed through a process of cultural transition. The concepts, signs and symbols of spiritual and material communication used in Guru Granth Sahib are evidence of the historical process of cultural fusion, social and political change which took place in the contemporary society. There is a considerable vocabulary preserved in Guru Granth Sahib from areas of religion, philosophy, mysticism, mythology, law and more common concerns of life from Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Punjabi and Braj languages.

Although this language is now somewhat obsolete, it is easily intelligible to anyone with knowledge of Punjabi. The universalism of the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib can be easily gauged from the selection of vernacular languages as medium of propagation of religion.

The cardinal religious truths and precepts explicit in the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib might be described as ideal vision of national



integration. The principal task at this critical juncture of our society is to overcome the evils of communalism and fundamentalism. We have to transcend religious divisions, caste prejudices and social stratifications and to develop an attitude of tolerance and goodwill towards other religions and sub-cultures. In a multi-religious society like India, the real harmony will only come when there is tolerance, social justice and equality. In this context, let us remember that integration of different strands of social fabric is a major concern of Guru Granth Sahib.

The main appeal of Guru Granth Sahib as a scripture is its message of God, secular character, and its universality. The Sikhs may well be proud of their religious ethos.

Guru Granth Sahib provides important guidelines on communal harmony in our multi-religious society. At this juncture when people of diverse faiths are going through a traumatic experience of communal tension, bias and prejudice, it is necessary to take inspiration from the message of tolerance and unity of humanity enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib.

The teachings of Guru Granth Sahib will greatly help us to generate a sense of unity and goodwill, and to cement many a missing link in our national mainstream. National sentiment which is deprived of the correct knowledge of national identity can be greatly helped by practising the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib.

The message of Guru Granth Sahib would also be rewarding for the understanding of cultural inheritance of India and its implication for national development.

The significance of Guru Granth Sahib is also imbibed in its relevance to the international context and its likely contribution to the theoretical aspect of the problem of human rights, social solidarity and integration. Its universal and cosmopolitan spirit helps us to build world peace and global understanding in the conditions of the contemporary times. The teachings of Guru Granth Sahib would enrich our knowledge and broaden our outlook for the growth of cultural integration of the world people and the promotion of universal brotherhood.

## THE ADI GRANTH SAHIB

KIRPAL SINGH\*

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We are fortunate that we are participating the quadricentennial celebration of installation of the *Adi Granth*. It was completed in 1604 AD at Ramsar (a place which was outside the town at that time and now within the city of Amritsar), and was installed in Darbar Sahib, now also called Golden Temple. The holy *Granth* was compiled by Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru (1582-1606 A.D.), while Bhai Gurdas, the nephew of Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru, worked as a scribe.

The Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, has thirty five contributors including six Sikh Gurus. Its contributors belonged to different strata of society – so-called high castes and low castes including even a cobbler, and a washerman. They belonged to different religious traditions and different parts of India; for instance, Kabir and Ravidas belonged to Uttar Pradesh, Namdev and Tarlochan to Maharashtra, Jaidev to Bengal, Dhanna to Rajasthan, and Baba Farid, a Muslim saint, to Punjab. Long before the dawn of modern civilization based on science and technology, the Sikh Scripture taught the lessons of co-existence and toleration which are so essential not only in the religious sphere, but also the strife-torn national and international spheres.

The hymns of the Holy Granth are classified under thirtyone *ragas*. In every *raga*, verses have been uniformly arranged, beginning with the hymns of Guru Nanak and the Sikh Gurus in the chronological order followed by the verses of Bhagat Kabir and other *bhagats*. The opening verse of the Guru Granth Sahib is *Jap ji* of Guru Nanak. The Granth Sahib ends with the thanks-giving hymn of Guru Arjun, the

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compiler of Holy Granth.

The hymns of the *Adi Granth* have universal appeal. They had not been addressed to any particular sect, community or nation. The Sikh Scripture was for the unification of all people. The Holy Granth is the only inter-communal religious *granth*. Dr Radhakrishnan stated, "a remarkable feature of the *Adi Granth* is that it contains writings of the religious teachers of Hinduism and Islam". There are about half a dozen Muslim *fakirs* whose verses have been included in the *Adi Granth*. Prominent among them are Sheikh Farid, Satta and Balwand.

Compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib made unique contribution in bringing the people of different cultures in the mainstream of humanism. Arnold Toynbee has rightly stated, "The Indian and Judaic religions are notoriously different in spirit. Their principal meeting ground has been India, where Islam impinged in Hinduism violently. On the whole, the story of relations between these two great religions on Indian ground has been an unhappy tale of mutual misunderstanding and hostility. To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord has been noble spiritual triumph".

In the atmosphere of all round religious antagonism in India, the Sikh Scripture exhorted interfaith dialogue and declared "one God is Father; we all human beings are His children".<sup>1</sup>

Gurbani guides us to pray to Him to bring peace to the minds of the people in whatever ways He pleases.

*Save by Thy grace, the world is in flames;*

*Save it at whatever portal it may be saved.*<sup>2</sup>

The Guru Granth Sahib accepts all the different ways in vogue to address Him :

*Some utter His name as Rama, others as Khuda;*

*Some serve the Lord of the universe, others Allah*

*Gracious Lord Almighty, Compassionate, show grace*

*Some bathe at Hindu holy spots, others perform Haj;*

*Some perform Puja, others bow their heads in namaṡ;*

*Some study vedas, others the Koran; some wear blue, others white.*

*Some are called Muhammadans, others Hindus.*

*Some seek bibisht others swarga.*

*Saith Nanak : Whoever the Divine will realizes,*

*The Lord's mystery has understood.*<sup>3</sup>

Guru Arjun, the compiler of the *Adi Granth* took positive steps to bring interfaith understanding. He ushered in a new era of religious understanding by defining religion in the simplest possible terms. His definition of religion consisted of only two things – Love of the *Naam* of God and purity of conduct. He wrote in a hymn :

*Of all religions the most exalted,  
And of all ritual actions the purest,  
Is contemplation of the Name Divine.  
Of all actions the highest is,  
In holy company to efface impure thinking.  
Of all endeavours the noblest, my self, is  
Ever the Name Divine to contemplate.  
Of all utterances the one conferring immortal life,  
Is listening to the Lord's laudation, utterance of it by one's tongue.  
Of all spots the holiest is, saith Nanak,  
The heart wherein is lodged the Name Divine.*<sup>4</sup>

“This was a new orientation of religion which revolutionized the old conception that one’s own doxy was orthodoxy and every body else’s was heterodoxy. The Guru made religion unitheological.”

There had been a dire need of communal understanding keeping in view the constant communal strife in India. The society was honeycombed with social exclusiveness and superstition. Religion could hardly be anything but a formal shapeless system of arid beliefs and lifeless rituals. The spirit of religion was hidden beneath a mass of formalities and extraneous observances. The Guru Granth Sahib, therefore, emphasises that true religion consists of love of God and good conduct. Guru Nanak has given the definition of a Muslim as well as a Hindu in his hymns in the Sikh scripture:

*Hard it is to deserve the name of Mussalman —  
Only one truly so, may such be called.  
First, must he hold in love the way of the holy;  
Like iron on grindstone should he cast off his possessions.  
In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith,  
And banish illusion of death and life.  
To the Lord's will should he be obedient :  
With faith in the Creator as compassionate he becomes,*

*May he be called a Mussalman.<sup>5</sup>*

To a yogi, Guru Nanak said:-

*Yoga lies not in the patched quilt, nor in carrying a staff;*

*Yoga lies not either in rubbing ashes over the limbs.*

*Yoga lies not in earrings, nor in close-cropping the head,*

*Nor in blowing the horn.*

*To abide undefiled amid Maya-defilement*

*Is the true way to attain success in Yoga-praxis.*

*Yoga by mere chatter is not practised.*

*To regard all alike with undifferentiating sight*

*Entitles one a true Yogi to be called.*

*Yoga lies not in frequenting wild places, tombs and cremation grounds*

*Nor in absorption in samadhi.*

*Yoga lies not in wandering over lands and regions,*

*Nor in bathing at holy spots.*

*To abide undefiled amid Maya-defilement.*

*Is the true way to attain success in Yoga-praxis.<sup>6</sup>*

Guru Granth Sahib shuns class, caste and creed, and vehemently stresses the equality of mankind. It gives highest respect to the divinity of man – *man tu jot sarup bain*. Man is the embodiment of God. The caste system has been described as the steel frame of Hindu society. Guru Granth Sahib exhorted his followers to defy the rules of caste exclusiveness which were the greatest obstacle in human integration. Positive steps were taken in this direction. The Guru exhorts his followers to meet in congregation and take meals in the common kitchen viz. *langar* where they were to sit together, worship together and eat together irrespective of their caste.

Thus, it is clear that Guru Granth Sahib inculcates the spirit of human integration which is at present the dire need of the world. It, therefore, will be in the fitness of things to get Guru Granth Sahib translated into major languages of the world and all regional languages of India including South Indian languages, so that quadricentennial celebration of installation of Guru Granth Sahib becomes a landmark in the history of human development.

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*I have studied the scriptures of the great religions, but I do not find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find here in these volumes (Guru Granth Sahib). They speak to a person of any religion or of none. They speak for the human heart and the searching mind.*

— Miss Pearl S Buck  
Noble Laureate

# CONCEPT OF SŪNYA (SŪNN) IN GURU GRANTH SAHIB

HARDEV SINGH\*

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## INTRODUCTION

The holy scripture of the Sikh faith, called Guru Granth Sahib (GGS), consists of hymns of devotion to God, inspired reflections on the cosmic order, the vision of the higher life and exhortation to man towards lifting himself to the state of spiritual peace and the attainment of liberation. The sacred volume was completed in 1604 when it was installed in Harmandir Sahib for the first time on 1st of September.

During twentyfirst century, dialogue between Science and Religion is the order of the day for ushering in world peace. GGS with its universal doctrines based on truth, compassion and justice is destined to play a sterling role at the global level. This is the only scripture, which corroborates modern scientific theories in the domain of cosmology.

Big Bang cosmology explains many features of our universe and it holds its sway due to experimental support it got during recent years. However, it has many enigmas yet to be resolved. For example: Who created the universe ? What was the pre-creation state of the universe? What will be the end or fate of the universe? Mathematical models fail to answer these questions. In fact, all mathematical equations fail at the moment of creation of the universe and its annihilation leading us to 'Singularities', a term which has become a cosmological buzzword these days.

GGS comes to the rescue of our modern day cosmologists. A wonderful doctrine of *Sūnya* is introduced in the Sikh scripture to

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explain the pre-creation state of the universe. God is the creator of the universe and He is the annihilator. So there is no enigma or concept of 'singularity' in GGS.

Surprisingly, Quantum Physics allows the universe to appear out of nothing at all, as a so-called vacuum fluctuation using the famous 'Uncertainty Principle'. Chaotic inflation led to the sudden expansion of the Universe out of a quantum fluctuation. Indian religious literature is full of references regarding creation of the universe. However, the doctrine of Sūnya, first introduced in Buddhism has been elaborated in GGS. It is a testimony of intuitive knowledge gained by the Sikh Gurus using *dib drishti* or spiritual vision which is of transcendental nature.

#### CONCEPT OF SŪNYA IN INDIAN TRADITION

*Sūnyam* and *Sūnyata* are two terms of major importance in Buddhism and have been used to denote 'emptiness', 'nothingness', 'non-substantiality' and 'the inexhaustible'. During the second century BC, Buddhist teachers in India emphasized the 'emptiness' as a basic description of the nature of existing things. They were known as 'teachers of emptiness' or *sunyavadins*. The emptiness of all things is a significant part of the Buddhishatva path to enlightenment in Mahayana Buddhism.

Nagarjuna, the greatest Buddhist philosopher, interprets *Sūnyata* in his treatise, *Madhyamika sutras*.<sup>1</sup> He established the theory of *Sūnyata* and accepted it as the fundamental principle underlying creation. The doctrine of the void is a method of rejecting all attachments because things have no 'self', that is, they are empty. 'Void' is not nothingness conceived in negative terms. This positive concept of 'void' is often compared with emptiness inside a vase. The state of *Sūnyata*, or void is one in which all polarity, all subject – object differentiation has ceased to exist. But for a *sunyavadin* this is a positive concept. *Sūnyata* is the negation of all views and is itself not a view !

In Siddha-Nath-Yogi tradition<sup>2</sup>, the term *sunya* has been used frequently. It is said that *sunya* is so transcendental that it is neither in the body nor is it out of the body. *Sūnya* has been linked with the *sabda* or *nada*. In the Hathयोगic and Tantrik cults, *Nada* or *Sabda* Brahman had been accepted as the original cause of the cosmos. In



the Siddha-Natha cult, *sunya* was considered as a synonym of *Sabda* or the absolute *Nada*, which is nothing but a trait of Absolute Reality. In Gorakh Bani, there is a mention of one *Sunyadvaya* in the *gaganmandal* wherein complete darkness, lightning flashes and the nectar trickles. The Siddha attains this stage by yoga practices. In the Siddha-Natha literature, the word *sunya* has been used in the following contexts :

- a) Supreme Reality (*Nada*), Supreme knowledge or Supreme nature.
- b) *Brahmanrandhra*, *Dasam dvaya*, the *Sahsra chakra* and *Gaganmandal*
- c) Siva-loka.

#### CONCEPT OF SUNYA IN SIKH TRADITION

We find an echo of *Sunyata* philosophy of Buddhism in Sikh scripture<sup>3</sup>, Guru Granth Sahib (GGS). Siddh-Nath-Yogis held their sway in Punjab before the advent of Sikhism. They all belong to the Sahajayani sect of Buddhism or its perverted forms after assimilation into Hindu fold. According to *Mahankosh*, there were twelve *panths* of Nath cult in Punjab and eightyfour Siddhas, with Guru Gorakh Nath as a leading figure among the Siddhas of Punjab. Guru Nanak's dialogue with Siddhas is recorded in GGS as *Siddh-Goshti* which is in the form of a religious debate concerning origin of cosmos, *sunya*, liberation and various other issues. Guru Nanak rejected the Hatha-Yoga cult of Siddhas and condemned the path of renunciation of the world followed by them. He advocated adoption of house-holder's life in this world and preached Sahaj-Yoga or Nam-Yoga, the Sikh way of life.

The term *sunya* occurs in *Siddh-Goshti*<sup>4</sup> when Siddhas pose a question to Guru Nanak :-

Q:- What about the pre-cosmos state ? Prior to it where the Lord of void abide ?

A:- The very thought of the pre-cosmos state lands one in a state of wonder. In the profound stillness of the *Sunya*, the formless one pervaded in continuum then.

*Siddh-Goshti* in GGS is a remarkable debate on the beliefs, practices and doctrines of the two systems; one propounded by the Siddhas and the other by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh faith. Philosophical questions concerning the origin of cosmos, life and mind, potency of *Sabda*, need for the Guru, nature of Supreme Reality and

the liberation for human soul are answered by Guru Nanak from the Sikh view-point. The concept of Ideal Man (*Gurmukh*) is propounded by Guru Nanak demolishing the concept of world renunciation practised by Siddhas.

### INTERPRETATIONS OF SÜNYA DOCTRINE IN GGS

Various interpretations of *Sünya* doctrine exist in GGS. We have an echo of Buddhist philosophy in the Sikh scripture. *Sünya* is not equated with void or emptiness in GGS. Rather, it represents the state of equipoise where Absolute Lord exists in primordial trance called *sünya samaadhi*<sup>5</sup> :

*The Yogi, the Primal Lord, sat within the celestial sphere of deepest trance (samaadhi).*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 685

In GGS, Absolute Reality or God is both immanent and transcendental.<sup>6</sup> He is formless, attributeless and hence beyond description :

*He possesses all qualities, He transcends all qualities; He is the formless Lord. He himself is in Primal trance (samaadhi).*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 290

In consonance with the Buddhist philosophy of *sunyata*, subject – object differentiation or concept of duality does not exist in the *sunya* state as enunciated by saint Kabir<sup>7</sup> in GGS :

*No life or death, no pain or pleasure is felt there. There is only the primal trance of samaadhi, and hence no duality.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 333

Absolute Reality or God is omnipresent and exists in the present, past and future. The truth of primordial existence of God before the creation of time and space is also explained by Guru Nanak in GGS<sup>8</sup> :

*Existed before the beginning of time and space;  
Existed throughout the various ages in the past;  
Exists in the present; and  
Will exist in the future.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1

There is also an echo of Siddha doctrine<sup>9-10</sup> of *sunya* in the form of *Nada* in GGS :

*The deepest samaadhi, and the unstruck sound current of the Naad is there.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 293

*There, the unstruck sound current of the Absolute Lord vibrates and resounds.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 943

### **SÜNYA PHASE AND CREATION OF UNIVERSE IN GGS**

The most original contribution of Sikh scripture is in the field of cosmology. Before the creation of the universe, Absolute Reality or God existed in the *Sūnya* phase, called *adi sach* by Guru Nanak. When the creation starts, both time and space are also created and this phase corresponds to *jugad sach*. In *Maru Solhe* composition in GGS, the process of creation is explained in a scientific manner corresponding to Big Bang cosmology. The primordial state of existence of God or *adi sach* is synonymous with the *Sūnya* phase as epitomised in GGS<sup>11</sup> :

*Billions of years ago,  
There was nothing but utter darkness,  
There was neither earth nor sky,  
And the will of God prevailed.  
There was neither day nor night, nor moon nor Sun;  
God sat in primal, profound trance (in Sunya).*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1035

Guru Arjun, the fifth Nanak, describes the primordial trance of God before the creation process starts as a manifestation of God<sup>12</sup> :

*For countless days, He remained invisibles.  
For countless days, He remained absorbed in Sūnya  
For countless days, there was utter darkness, and  
Then the Creator revealed Himself.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1081

According to Guru Arjun<sup>13</sup>, there was no duality in the *Sūnya* phase of existence of God as already discussed under the Indian tradition of Buddhist philosophy :

*When there was no creation,  
Whence was the need for virtue and vice ?  
When God was in Primordial trance (Sunya samaadhi),*

*Whence was the need for enmity or jealousy ?  
 When God was not in Its manifested form,  
 Thence who could suffer pain or feel happy ?  
 When God was in Its transcendental Entity,  
 Thence who was lured by attachment or by doubt ?*

However, the most beautiful elaboration of Sunya doctrine is given by Guru Nanak in his composition *Maru Solbe* in GGS.<sup>14</sup> *Sünya* is compared to a primal void where God exists in Its full effulgence. The creation appears when God wills out of this *sünya* phase. All the seventeen stanzas of seventeenth *Solbe* give us a vivid description of *sünya* and there is no parallel in Indian religious literature to the spiritual vision of Guru Nanak. We may quote only a few reflections from this vision :

*In the Sünya (Primal void), the infinite Lord assumed his Power.  
 He Himself is unattached infinite and incomparable.*

*From the Sünya, He created air and water.  
 He created universe and the man in the fortress of body.  
 From this Sünya, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva issued forth.  
 From this Sünya, the moon, the sun and the earth were created. They were  
 created from Sünya, and they will merge into the sünya.  
 From the Sünya, the five elements became manifest.*

*From the True Guru, contemplative meditation is obtained.  
 And then, one dwells with the True Lord  
 In His celestial home, in deepest samaadhi of sunya.  
 O Nanak, the immaculate sound current of the Naad  
 And the music of the Sabad, resound;  
 One merges into the True Naam of the Lord.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p.1037

## CONCLUSION

The concept of *Sünya* as introduced by Guru Nanak in GGS has far reaching implications for understanding the philosophy of Sikhism.<sup>15</sup> Apparently, the concept has theoretical linkage with Indian philosophy as it developed during the Buddhist era. Guru Nanak re-interpreted it and hence its import in Sikh metaphysics.

When Siddhas ask Guru Nanak: “Who are they, who are attuned to this Absolute *Sūnya*”? Guru Nanak answers: “They are the *Gurmukhs* (Guru-oriented), like the God, from whom they originated.” While *Sūnya* doctrine was used to promote renunciation and monasticism by its Buddhist advocates known as *śūnyavadins*, Guru Nanak condemned it and advocated the life style of a *Gurmukh*, the house-holder who faces the challenges of worldly life. Thus, theoretical implications of *Sūnya* doctrine may be identical in both Buddhism and Sikhism, but empirical meanings are different in the two systems. In the Sikh metaphysics, *Sūnya* represents the pre-creation stage of our cosmos when God or Absolute Reality was absorbed in Himself, and realm of duality was non-existent.

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9. ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥ (GGS, p. 1)
10. ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਅਨਹਤ ਤਹ ਨਾਦ ॥ (GGS, p. 293)
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12. ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥  
ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥ (GGS, p. 1035)

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF GURU ANGAD DEV TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM

MALKIAT SINGH\*

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The medieval Punjab, especially in the Guru period, witnessed the most crucial phase in its history and cultural evolution. In the Indian context, the period had undergone a serious conflict and more or less a direct clash or head-on collision between the two social systems -Hinduism and Islam. The decline and downfall of Delhi Sultanate was followed by the establishment of the Mughal rule and the consequent collapse of the Hindu as well as the remnants of the Turkish feudal polity in north India. The forces of social stress and strain continued to rage with a varying degree of intensity in the various parts of the country, while Islam was firmly *rooted* in the Punjab soil as a powerful social force.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Punjab society had decidedly come to be divided into two well-defined social orders, based on religious denominations, which for the sake of convenience, we may term as the Hindu and the Muslim society. During the same period, a religious sect, 'humble in its origin, unpretending in its primitive character, silently arose amidst the tumult of arms'<sup>1</sup> and laid the foundation of a great Order, which in later period was destined to exert a permanent influence upon the political and religious destinies of Punjab and India.

The present brief paper, however, is confined only to the discussion of the revival of the dying Hindu society of Punjab and the emergence of a new social order (Sikhism) under Guru Nanak, its founder and the steps taken by his worthy successor Guru Angad Dev in furthering the lead taken by his Master towards perpetuation of the

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early Sikh society and Sikhism.

#### **HINDU SOCIAL ORDER IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

Guru Nanak and his successor, Guru Angad Dev, saw the Hindu religion choked up by weeds of meaningless ceremonies, debasing superstitions, selfishness of the priests and indifference of the people. In the words of Narang, "... form had supplanted the reality and the spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects."<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say that the Hindu religion was confined only to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead and other such mechanical observances. The worship of idols, wherever they were permitted to exist, pilgrimages to the Ganges and other sacred places, whenever they were allowed, the observance of certain ceremonies like the marital and funeral rites, the obedience to the mandates of the Brahmins and bestowing lavish charitable gifts upon them constituted Hinduism as it was then current among the masses. The priests alone could study the scriptures, and to them alone were accessible the higher truths and consolations of Hindu philosophy. Some of them still knew the scriptures by heart but in their practical life they were just the opposite of what they were required to be by their scriptures. They were required to be good shepherds to their flocks, but the only function of shepherd they performed was to fleece their flocks.<sup>3</sup>

#### **MUSLIM SOCIETY**

The Muslim society in medieval Punjab, was also marked by differences and divided into Sunnis, Shias, Ismailis, etc. However, the Sunnis held a predominant position in medieval Punjab. The assumption that the Islamic society was bound to be based on the idea of equality is refuted by the prevailing socio-economic situation. A broad social stratification in the Muslim society was easily discernible. A high degree of honour and respect was paid to the foreign and non-Indian Muslims who enjoyed a high privilege in the Muslim social hierarchy.

#### **SIKHISM — THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER**

Most of the reform movements that had preceded or were contemporaneous to Guru Nanak and Guru Angad Dev, were only

sectarian in character, and had only served to make confusion more confounded. The Hindu reform movements initiated by Ramanand or Gorakh Nath and others (including Kabir and Chaitanya), were aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestly class or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. These can be viewed more as forms of dissent rather than striving towards planting the germs of nations and, therefore, have remained to this day as their leaders left them.<sup>4</sup>

Although Guru Nanak had two sons, Sri Chand and Lachhmi Dass, the torch of Guruship was handed over to his simple, sincere and faithful disciple Bhai Lehna, whom the Guru thought to be most fit to succeed him. Guru Nanak changed his name to Angad (*Ang-i-Khud*) or own body who was acknowledged as the teacher or next prophet of the Sikhs.

Guru Angad was quick to realize the dangers to which the mission of his Master was exposed. The followers of Guru Nanak were yet to be taken out fully from their orthodoxy. The ritualistic life of the Hindus in Punjab had to be brought out of the fold of the Hindu priesthood, and a new religious and social code had to be introduced. Without deviating from the chosen path of Guru Nanak, his successors took several initiatives to give Sikhism a distinctive character and an individuality of its own. That was the best way to perpetuate the influence and noble examples of a higher level of social and religious life, which his Master had set before his followers.

#### **GURU ANGAD DEV AND DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM**

Guru Angad Dev took several steps to give emerging Sikh society a distinctive character. The first and most important was the teaching and popularising Gurmukhi (Punjabi) characters in which all the sacred *gurbani* is written. This step gave a powerful blow to the old Hindu order and the common mass of people who had so far looked towards priestly class, whose monopoly over knowledge of Sanskrit had given them a dominating position. The emerging Sikh social order was thus saved from complete absorption by the priestly dominated Hindu mass.<sup>5</sup>

All accounts agree that the Guru was an inspired divine poet who composed *slokas* in popular Punjabi, which communicated the message in terms easily understood by the members of his following. His compositions consist of sixty-three *slokas*. Another notable



institution, that of *langar* (free kitchen), set up by Guru Nanak was further popularized and expanded by Guru Angad Dev. It not only served the needy, but also led to further popularizing the mission of Guru Nanak. It was, henceforth, supported by the combined contributions of a new community and it taught the Sikhs the first lesson of contributing money towards a common fund. Guru Angad not only extended the scope of the institution, but also helped the inmates with cooking and serving in the *langar*. His wife Mata Khivi, looked after the pilgrims and visitors with the utmost attention. Such was her dedication to work in *langar* that it came to be known after her name as *Mata Khivi ji da langar*.<sup>6</sup> The institution of *langar* not only served as a strong bond of union among the new brotherhood but also proved to be a powerful weapon to break the crust of caste, as all Sikhs, rich or poor, Brahmins or non-Brahmins shared the same food and dined together without any distinction.

Mohsin Fani, the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, ably sums up a near contemporary account about early Sikhism. "The disciples of Nanak", according to Mohsin Fani,<sup>7</sup> "condemn idol-worship. Their belief is that all their Gurus are Nanak. They do not read the *Mantras* (i.e., *Vedic* or *Puranic* chants) of the Hindus. They do not venerate their temples of idols, nor do they esteem their *Avatars*. They have no regard for Sanskrit language, which according to Hindus is the speech of angels. In short, during the time of each *Mahal* (Guru) the Sikhs increased till in the reign of Guru Arjun Mal they became numerous, and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found".

Mohsin Fani further informs that "there is no restriction among them that a Brahmin may not become the disciple of a Khattri, for Nanak was a Khattri, and no Guru amongst them was from the Brahmins, as has been described. Similarly they placed Khattris under the authority of Jats, who belong to the low caste of the Vaishyas, as the big *Masands* (agents or deputies) of the Guru are mostly Jats. The Brahmins and Khattris are (becoming) *Meli* and *Sablang*, i.e., pupils and disciples of the Guru, through the medium of a *Masand*, and are accepted into the pupilage and discipline of the Guru."<sup>8</sup>

The initiatives taken by Guru Angad Dev, enabled the Sikhs to drift away from the orthodox Hindu society. The Sikhs gradually

distinguished themselves from other religious sects through a separate order, language, community kitchen and, above all, a new faith. Its stern ethical code and its definite Puritanism were elements, which further distinguished it from similar movements in India. As in case of Guru Nanak, the theological and moral teachings of Guru Angad Dev too, were in tune with those of his Master. The Guru not only laid down but also properly defined the boundaries to distinguish the Sikhs from the others by taking several steps in evolving the distinct identity of the Sikhs. Bhai Lehna, emerging as the Second Nanak will always be remembered for his contributions towards development of language, (Gurmukhi) and *langar*.

To sum up, the whole Sikh social order, due to the untiring efforts of Guru Angad, gradually stood distinguished from other similar contemporary and later reform movements. Its main characteristic was its non-sectarian character and its reconciliation with secular life. Nevertheless, it underwent some political, religious and martial developments, which over time finally paved the way for Sikhism to break away completely from the older faith of Hinduism and finally develop in the form in which we find it today.

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**PSYCHOANALYSIS OF DR W H MCLEOD**  
**BASED ON**  
***DISCOVERING THE SIKHS– AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HISTORIAN***

**SURINDER SINGH\* & JASBIR SINGH\*\***

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*Science is a part and parcel of our knowledge, but it obscures our insight  
when it holds that the understanding given by it is the only kind there is.*

– Carl Jung

The main thrust of this paper is to psychoanalyse Dr Hew McLeod's recent book *Discovering The Sikhs*. As it is an autobiography, an attempt will be made to critically look at his personality functioning using many psychological paradigms. The following Western psychological paradigms will be used.

- a. Growing Up Absurd (Paul Goodman)
- b. Man in Search of Meaning (Victor Frankle)
- c. Gandhi's Truth  
Identity vs Role Confusion  
Intimacy vs Isolation  
Generativity vs Stagnation  
Integrity vs Despair (Erik Erikson)
- d. One Dimensional Man (Herb Marcuse)
- e. Divided Self, Interpersonal Perception – Politics of Experience (R D Liang)
- f. DSM IV – The “Bible” used by American Psychiatric Association
- g. Blaming the Victims (Dr Ryan)
- h. The Voice of Experience, Science & Psychiatry (R D Liang)

In *Discovering The Sikhs* (whom he never discovered!), Dr McLeod attempts to tell us that:

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He wants to explain his method (of doing research) dealing with the Sikhs to the Sikhs (p. 1). "It is a historian's quest for the truth" (p. 3).

"I am a Western historian and the society I study is not my own-using Western methodology" (p. 4).

Dr McLeod got his Ph D in 1965 from University of London after seven years of total exposure to Sikhism. It is interesting to note that there were many famous historians living in Punjab such as Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh, Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh, yet Dr McLeod chose to work under Dr Basham who knew nothing about Sikhism. No ethics-committee was set up to examine his thesis proposal and none of the members of his thesis committee were Punjabi-knowing Sikhs. It must be pointed out that his other students (Pashaura Singh, Oberoi and Fenech) followed the model set by him to become instant historians of Sikh history. Their thesis proposals, too, were not examined by the ethics committee. No input was sought from the ethnic community under study and no exposure was provided to these students about Social Science Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC-1993) guidelines.

After receiving his Ph D, Dr McLeod's academic career can be divided as follows:

Baring Christian College, Batala 1965-69 (He claims that during this period, his religious beliefs dwindled to zero and he started looking for Truth in Sikh history.)

1969-2002: Teaching at the University of Otago, undermining Sikh traditions but missing teaching in North American universities and obsessively displaying doubts, skepticism in his search for the truth. He was not at all empathy-oriented to Sikh ethos and traditions, and went as far as comparing Bano, Kartarpur and Damadama versions of Guru Granth Sahib to figure out which one was the 'Real Live Guru of the Sikhs.' (The readers are directed to Dr McLeod's article *Sikh Scriptures - Some Issues* in a book on Sikh Studies edited by G Barrier (1979, pp. 97-111).

As a Western historian, Dr McLeod claims that he has the authority to look for truth and if, in the process, traditions get destroyed and trampled over, so it be! As a Sikh Psychologist trained in the Western tradition with twenty-seven years of teaching experience

(1968-95) in the Western universities and practicing psychotherapy for eight years (1995-2003), I would use his book *Discovering The Sikhs – Autobiography of a Historian* to psychoanalyse him using psychoanalytical method and hope the truth about him will emerge.

I have another advantage. I met Hew and his wife, Margaret in Halifax, Canada in October 1991. It gave me a chance to observe his research orientations and family dynamics or “co-dependency” they had on each other. This meeting led me to write my article entitled “Pathology of Pseudo-Sikh Researchers With Linear Myopic, Left Brain and Mystified Western Realities,” which has been declared as absurd by Dr McLeod in *Discovering The Sikhs* (p. 201).

Thirdly, I come from Kharar, and hence have a firsthand knowledge of what kind of missionary work was done by Dr Ryburn who was supposed to be replaced by Dr McLeod. I would like to discuss cognitive dissonance which Hew might have experienced after meeting ‘seventy-eight Rice Christian Children’ of Kharar School and he did not know what to do with them.

In Chapter one *The Reason Why*, Hew tries to justify his Western methodology of looking for truth in Sikh history. He also claims that he was a shy introvert and had “impoverished social skills.” In Halifax in 1991, I found him a bit anxious, at times confused, dependent, fearful, melancholy, self-conscious, unappreciated, unfulfilled, suffering from wishy-washy obsessive-compulsiveness with linear one-dimensional thinking. His historical research training took place in New Zealand; hence he was not exposed to Afro-centric or Khalsa-centric ethnic paradigms of research. As a result, he was not interested in wonder stories of *Janam Sakhis* or mythology and miracles of religions.

In Chapter two, Hew tells us that he was the second born son of Margaret and Bruce McLeod. Dr McLeod's grandfather and his father never attended church, but his mother was a believer in Presbyterian denomination of Christian faith. Applying Adlerian psychology it can be inferred that being a second born son to a non-believing, shy father and a devoted Christian mother had profound influence on Hew's early development. He may have internalized his non-relatedness and non-believing attitudes from his father through reaction formation (DSM IV), which later on destroyed his belief system.

Being second born to his older brother Ian, may have produced in him goal striving, urge to power, feeling of relative inferiority to an “acquired” feeling of superiority, an urge to sharply dichotomize and categorize as a means of self discovered truth through obsessive-compulsive behaviour. According to Dr Adler, neurotic researchers try to raise their self-esteem by destroying the belief system of others. Organ inferiority (height of the person, et cetera) produces self-centredness. Second born child always wants power to change hands (from tradition to truth). In discovering Sikhs, Hew tells us that “The power of the Head Boy appealed to me enormously – and I was also the Regimental Sergeant-Major of the School's cadet-corps.”

It can be inferred that this Adlerian strive for power may be manifesting in Hew to become Sergeant Major of Sikh research (a VIP) producing many sepoys dancing around the “truth” so discovered.

The influence of Dr McLeod's father for making him a VIP, Rev J Hays for making him a Presbyterian minister and his own desire to become Principal of one of New Zealand's better secondary schools motivated his undergraduate and graduate career.

University years provided Hew opportunity to interact socially and spiritually with members of opposite sex through Student Christian Movement where people failed to notice that he was a Head Boy at Nelson! This non-recognition was hurting Hew's self image which he compensated by becoming a Divinity student and also becoming a member of the executive of Otago University Student Association. It can be easily seen that use of religion to gain power and mobility had entered Hew's personality functioning. Hew started having doubts about his Christian belief system in 1955, but kept quiet due to insecurity. It took him eight years to become a non-believer, but in the meantime, he was ordained and used missionary money to leave New Zealand and live in India and used missionary school facilities of India to educate his children in Woodstock School in Landour near Mussoorie, India (1958-69). It represented for Hew years of positive disintegration (Dubroski), cognitive dissonance (Festinger) with problems of becoming (Allport) and total conversion (William James). Before he could leave New Zealand for missionary trip to replace Dr Ryburn in Kharar, India, he had to be ordained. He showed his ambivalence and anti-social, non-conforming personality and doubts

in the Lordship of Christ by replacing the Christian Clerical Collar with a tie and going through the ceremony that for him was devoid of meaning (Divided Self and Politics of Experience, R D Liang), (DSM IV). Hew is silent about how he resolved his doubts in the Lordship of Christ!

During his stay in Kharar, it became clear to Hew that he was not a "missionary type." He could not relate to the Christian community of Kharar, its children and make sense of their cognitive styles. Hew could have taken time to figure out the role various Christian Institutes of Kharar played in the life of seventy-eight Christian children. He could have looked at British education system as a Cultural Imperialism (Carnoy). But there is no power, ego pedestals for a missionary in doing this kind of radical research; hence, after five years of stay in Kharar, going to Golden Temple many times and appreciating the respect Sikhs showed to Guru Granth Sahib, collecting material for further studies in Sikhism, he sailed to New Zealand and then back to England to do a Ph D in the School of Oriental and African Studies, where Professor Basham worked. Later in 1979, he questioned the very identity of Guru Granth Sahib. Knowing that Basham did not know ABC of Sikhism or Punjabi language, Hew still accepted him as his thesis advisor. On June 30, 1965 these non-Sikhs, non-Punjabi supervisors gave Hew a Ph D from University of London on the thesis he wrote himself and got it approved without any input from his supervisors. No wonder his research is one-sided, non-holistic, linear, left brain, perceptually selective and myopic. An eclectic training with various Ph D level courses would have opened "Hew's Doors of Perception" (A Huxley) and may have landed him a job in North America, which he desperately wanted.

Mission schools were opened in Amritsar and Batala after the Empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was taken over by the British colonizers. He does not say a word about the conversion of Maharaja Dalip Singh by missionaries and the motivation of Amritsar, Batala or Kharar missionaries to produce Rice Christians out of Harijans. Hew misses the concept of Cultural Imperialism (Canvay) while discussing the non-motivation of his history students in Batala. As a missionary, McLeod found Batala a better campus than poverty-stricken Kharar. At Batala, Hew became a confirmed atheist and experienced "truthful

bliss" while his wife stayed agnostic. He also arrogantly declared that for him, *Adi Granth* was not his Guru and he has the right to analyse it. His atheistic belief system may have become existentialism of Sartre or he may have become a Marxist. He claims that his becoming a missionary was a "youthful aberration." At a conference organized by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, Hew's book *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion* was aggressively criticized by Sirdar Kapur Singh. It is unbelievable that Hew did not care to find out the reasons; his Eurocentric research had started to bother Sikh scholars. His ego would not let him do that!

Hew and Margaret claim that they did not feel guilty after leaving the Christian faith. A question can be raised regarding their use of Christian facilities in Kharar, Batala and Landour, and travels all over the world with missionary money. Is it possible that they unconsciously wanted to exploit the faith they had left behind? It does provide a glimpse into the selfish streak in their personality-functioning (DSM, IV), which could be broadly called a psychosocial-pathological behaviour. Dr McLeod goes on to justify his attack on *Janam Sakhis* as mythical stories, Jats' influence on Panth, Kartarpur Bir, travels of Guru Nanak and regression in Sikhs brought by Guru Amardas.

On one hand, he keeps on asserting that an outsider should be very careful in dealing with the sensitive issues of Sikh studies such as Guru Granth Sahib, yet he tried to let loose people like Pashaura Singh and Oberoi to dig like drain inspectors and destroy the traditions so dear to the Sikhs. It appears he got vicarious satisfaction (Bandura) by putting Sikh researchers such as Oberoi, on Sikh Chairs at University of British Columbia, as he could not himself land a job in a North American university. It is amazing that a Ph D from University of London could be so myopic as not to recognize the dangers of planting a Eurocentric Sikh researcher on a Chair created by the donations of rural Sikhs of India who have made Canada their home and felt that a Sikh scholar at the University of British Columbia would help them find ways of enhancing their needs of transmitting Sikh traditions to second generation children. It is a known fact that Government of India objected to the creation of a Sikh Chair at University of British Columbia, but McLeod came to their rescue by recommending an anti-Sikh researcher to put cold water on their enthusiasm.



Hew felt upset when Sikhs called him "Reverend." He also felt upset when he was called an agent of Government of India. A man is known by the company he keeps. His association with missionaries of Kharar and Batala and Dr Grewal and his student Indu Banga at Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Simla is taken as a proof of his affiliations. Also foreign missionaries had a great deal of difficulty getting Indian visas, I do not think Dr McLeod was ever denied one. Sikhs have not forgotten how Royal Family of Kapurthala was converted to Christianity by missionaries and also how Maharaja Duleep Singh was made to undergo ceremonies of humiliation from 1850-1860 before he agreed to become a Christian.

There is no doubt that Sikhs showed a "Burnt Child Dreads the Fire" approach to McLeod's writings, but Hew should remember that he came as a White missionary to India. Sikhs still have in their "Collective Unconscious" memories of how missionaries of Ludhiana, 1832 – on, spied on the Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Western friends of the Sikhs such as Henry Lawrence, General Ventura, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Harding, Major Broadfoot and Lord Dalhousie to mention a few, cheated Sikhs of their hard earned empire and Sir John Login, a missionary, converted Maharaja Ranjit Singh's son, Duleep Singh to Christianity at the tender age of eleven through brainwashing and making him and his mother, Rani Jindan suffer.

In Chapter six, Otago Years (1971-2002), Hew claims that he introduced a second year paper on Historical Methods and Interpretation and used his classes to show how ignorant Sikh scholars were attacking a "faithful, truth-finding historian". I hope the outline of the above-mentioned course was not lopsided and Eurocentric as all his writings were! He also claims that he had gotten *Janam Sakhi* published by Guru Nanak University Press through the influence of Professor Grewal who later on was his associate at the University of Toronto. Some Sikh scholars claim that Mr Grewal had connections with Government of India. During these years, Hew was collecting *Rahitnamas* to prove that Khalsa with 5 *K's* was not created in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, but was a later invention.

In 1985, Hew was given a grant by Government of India to visit Indian universities. It can be inferred that the events of 1984 may have motivated Government of India to make him go to universities

and talk about the Sikhs and their traditions as seen by him. During this period, he also got Commonwealth Fellowship from University of Toronto. It will be very interesting to find out what kind of grant proposals were made by him to the Government of India and to the Commonwealth Society. Eurocentric Birds of a Feather (researchers) such as John Simpson, Will Oxtoby, Milton Isreal, Joseph O'Connell, Ainslie Embree, Jack Hawley, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jerry Barrier had started gathering at the University of Toronto. All they needed was a "Big Bird," hence McLeod was invited to put the Canadian Sikhs in their place with the blessings of Fabian, Consulate General, Government of India stationed in Toronto in 1985. [There is a documented evidence (minutes) U B C President's meeting with Fabian] that Government of India was against setting up Sikh Studies Chairs at University of British Columbia with the money collected by rural Sikhs of Punjab who had settled in Canada. When the Chair was approved, thanks to Government of Canada's contribution, Hew helped all Canadian Sikhs by recommending Oberoi to sit on that Chair and produce non-relevant anti-Sikh research. It must be stated that Hew's Otago years were not without purpose. He was getting grants from Government of India and Commonwealth, planning to start University of Toronto Sikh Studies program to produce and plant "historians in a hurry" in various North American universities.

On February 2, 1987, at the age of fifty-four, because of his excessive work, on the go type A personality, Hew suffered stroke on the left side of his brain which affected his right side of the body. His writing competencies were not affected. He claims to have written three books while recovering from stroke! – "talk of death wish or denial producing depression and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder behaviour" (DSM IV). His oral competencies were affected and he developed problem in spoken language especially in the area of "switching." His atheist academic outlook had overpowered his behaviour and he had lost all capacity to enjoy "the other kinds of seeing." He was back in Toronto in 1988, even though he suffered a near death stroke in 1987. I call this type of personality, driven, egocentric, self-destructive and insensitive to the needs of his partner, Margaret.

Canada Years 1988 – As Hew's motivation was to train some Sikh scholars in Canada, he found an ex-*granthi* (Pashaura Singh). While at Calgary, Pashaura Singh finished his degree and wrote M A thesis on Bhagats (Kabir and Farid) under the supervision of non-Sikhs who did not know ABC of *Gurbani*. Anyway, Mr Singh who declared Kabir as a semi-illiterate person in his M A thesis got admission to newly minted and funded program by Canada Council and the local Sikh community. It is very interesting to note that even though the University of Toronto Sikh scholars applied and got Social Science Humanities Research Council of Canada funding yet every ethics guideline set by the secular body was violated. When this violation was brought to the attention of Dr Carole Murphy, Director, Fellowship Division, Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ottawa and Dr Adel Sedra, Vice-President and Provost, University of Toronto, they investigated and stopped the funding, thereby producing banishment from Toronto of this Eurocentric group. The readers are referred to a well written book *Planned Attack on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib : Academics or Blasphemy* edited by B S Giani (1994) to see for themselves why we should not feel "disgraced" over what we did to stop this unethical non-sense that went on in Toronto with funds provided by Canada Council or Toronto Sikhs.

McLeod is upset that his other instant scholars such as Fenech and Oberoi were also mistreated. A brief summary and hypothesis of Dr Fenech's thesis are given and the readers can make their own judgements. Fenech (1994) states that:

- The purpose behind Sikh Martyrologies is to demonstrate the profound victory in what at first appears to be a defeat (So, Baba Deep Singh was actually defeated.) !
- The motivation of Sikh martyrs came from the taunt or *mehna*, and not from their faith in Gurus.
- Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom was instigated by Brahminic taunts.
- Guru Gobind Singh's *Zafarnama* is an example of a taunt.

This shameful and lopsided research done by an instant Sikh scholar of Maltese extraction was again published by Oxford University Press, Delhi and Hew feels very proud of imposing such half-baked scholars on the Sikhs, and feels upset that we do not give a warm welcome to their degrading research about our role models and Gurus.

Dr McLeod feels that those who rose against Dr Oberoi earned a black mark against their name. The University of British Columbia made a wise decision by first not changing their minds about Sikh Chairs under the influence of Government of India and then removing Oberoi for violating norms of SSHRC, Canada. If Minister of Education, Province of British Columbia had his say, Oberoi would have been fired. Anybody who wants to meet this Sikh scholar can see him wandering in the streets of Vancouver, clean shaven, holding hands of his *keshadhari* children and claiming that at least he got a University of British Columbia professorship out of the stupidity of the Sikhs!

Dr McLeod keeps on complaining that his work and research were very severely treated in print. Did he ever think of why so many Sikh scholars such as Judge Gurdev Singh, S Daljeet Singh, Jagjit Singh, Kharak Singh, Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, Gurtej Singh, J S Mann, Gurbakhsh Singh, Tarlochan Singh, Ganda Singh, Fauja Singh, Harbans Singh, Justice Choor Singh, Balwant Singh Dhillon, Surinder Singh Kohli, Surinder Singh Sodhi, Gobind Singh Mansukharni, Madanjit Kaur, Saran Singh (*Sikh Review*), Noel King, Pamela Wylam (Manjit Kaur), James R Lewis, Surjit Singh, Bachittar Singh Giani, Sangat Singh, Avtar Singh, Dr H S Dilgeer, S S Kapoor (London), Tharam Singh, Arvindpal Singh Mandair, Pritpal Singh Bindra and finally, Jathedar Manjit Singh of Sri Kesgarh Sahib had to publish material against him? Did he ever care to “discover” the hurt he has caused the Sikhs because of his “egostonic”(DSM IV) behaviour?

He claims that all the above scholars were bent on demonizing his group. While discovering Sikhs, he forgot that Sikhs used to say in their *ardas* “*are so jhare* (ਅੜੇ ਸੋ ਝੜੇ).” Sikhs, he should have known by now, can extend a hand of friendship to even a missionary of Kharar, but to save the *izzat* of the nation and religion they can also take the person to the cleaners. The examples of S Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh can be cited from the recent history.

*Discovering The Sikhs, an Autobiography of a Historian* by Dr Hew McLeod is a very troubling book written by a very troubled person. If Hew could have stayed in Kharar to look after the well being of seventy-eight Christian children and cared for Christian Boys School, he would be remembered in the Education System of Punjab as Dr Ryburn is

still remembered. Incidentally, the Kharar School is in ruins and Marshal Press is also closed because various missionaries came to Kharar, used school's resources and left for greener pastures.

As a psychologist, I would advise him to start reading the books mentioned at the beginning of this article. He should have read them at the time of doing his Ph D. These will help him in becoming holistic and forgiving. Furthermore, he may need to

- Undergo psycho-spiritual therapy to get back to his pre-morbid condition.
- Gain ability to capitalize from past experiences.
- Lose his ego chains for perception of reality and social sensitivity.
- Decrease dichotomy between his real self and acquired self.
- Develop Universal Cosmic Consciousness and stop seeing lines between “Sanatanic Sikhs and Khalsa Sikhs.”
- Undergo positive disintegration by the process of de-automatization through prayers of self-regard.
- Become an instrument of Super-power attributive Will.
- Kill egotism, a neurosis of the soul and I-am-ness.
- Replace argument with experience, rational with metaphoric, abstract with concrete, symbolic with perceptual, differential with existential, analytical with Gestalt, linear with holistic and Buddhi with *Mannas*.
- Stop cultivating linear garden of Sikh research, light a candle, let the beauty appear without efforts or documentation.
- Seek Satorie, at-one-ment with life at this phase of his life.
- Train himself in mental silence.
- Stop de-naturing nature by using language and labels.
- Train yourself into choiceless attention.
- Develop wise passiveness and awareness without comparison.
- Say his prayer of self-regard to become seer and the seen.
- Use meditation to dwell upon something to produce a metaphoric universe.
- Use transcendental operationalism to develop a mind which has no boundaries.
- Know that without mysticism, a Historian is a Monster.
- Enjoy the fathomlessly strange, enigmatic “other kind of seeing.”
- Get out of the automatized, caged, cultural and educational

conditioning of New Zealand.

- Through mind fasting, lose attachments.
- Leave the control of five senses; pass through shadow, ego biosocial existential, transpersonal bands to enjoy eternity-infinity.
- Get related to the Ground of being.
- Through de-automatization, come to his senses by losing his mind.

□

*Pure Sikhism is far above dependence on Hindu rituals and is capable of a distinct position as a world religion so long as Sikhs maintain their distinctiveness. The religion is also one which should appeal to the occidental mind. It is essentially a practical religion. If judged from the pragmatic standpoint which is a favorite point of view in some quarters, it would rank almost first in the world. (Emphasis by the author). Of no other religion can it be said that it has made a nation in so short a time.*

*...The religion of the Sikhs is one of the most interesting at present existing in India, possibly indeed in the whole world. A reading of the Granth strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world religion rather than a reformed sect of Hinduism.*

– Dorothy Field  
*The Sikh Religion*

## DR ZIDANI'S INTERPRETATION OF GURU NANAK'S THOUGHTS: A REJOINDER

BALDEV SINGH\*

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### INTRODUCTION

Early this year, Professor Devinder Singh Chahal forwarded Dr Muhammed Bilal Zidani's letters to me. I declined to comment, as it is evident from the letters that 1) Dr Zidani is interpreting Guru Nanak's thoughts on the basis of his faith – Islam and 2) he thinks that the “Truth” is exclusive to Islam. I thought Professor Chahal would give him an appropriate reply and that would end the discussion. However, his continuous insistence on the correctness of his views and misinterpretation of Guru Nanak's thoughts published later on in the *Sikh Spectrum* persuaded me to respond to him.

### DISCUSSION

Dr Zidani's knowledge about Guru Nanak is based on what others have written about him, not on Guru Nanak's own writings enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib (GGS)<sup>1</sup>, which is the only authentic source of his philosophy. The opponents of Nanak's philosophy have been distorting Guru Nanak's thoughts since the time of Guru Nanak. They called him *kurahiya* – one following a wrong path. They even killed two of his successor Gurus and carried out mass murders of Sikhs and the destruction of Sikh literature and places of worship in order to extinguish the light of Guru Nanak's message of universal humanism – love, respect, justice and equality for all.

Nanak's philosophy differs from other religions in the basic premise – the concept of God. Sure, the concept of one God was known long before Guru Nanak. However, that God was nothing

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more than a tribal god. In addition to millions of gods, Hindus also believe in a God who communicates only through the Brahmins and then there is a God for the chosen people - Jews. Christian God is approachable only through His only son, Jesus Christ whereas the Muslim God, Allah is accessible only through Mohammed who is Allah's last and final Prophet in a long line of Prophets.

On the other hand, Guru Nanak preached about God who is accessible to all seekers of "Truth" irrespective of their creed, caste, gender, color, ethnicity and geographical consideration.

My Master is One, hey brother, the Almighty is surely One Only for all.<sup>2</sup> The true Guru has made me see that the One is in every thing and every thing is in One.<sup>3</sup> When I realized the True One within, then I saw Him outside. Nanak, the Almighty pervades everywhere and in every pore of the creation.<sup>4</sup> There is one Father and we all are His progeny.<sup>5</sup> Nanak says, that a true Guru (God) brings all together to meet Him.<sup>6</sup> Within all there is light and it is Thy light which is in all.<sup>7</sup> O *kaz̤i* (Muslim magistrate) think it over dispassionately that Allah resides within all. Kabir proclaims loudly that the same God is within both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

One does not need a special agent or broker (prophet) to realize God. In a hymn addressed to a Muslim, Guru Nanak says : "The mere fact of subscribing to the faith of Prophet Muhammad ensures nothing, neither paradise nor salvation. Such a presumption refutes an essential attribute of Allah: He is inscrutable. God's grace cannot be taken for granted: Allah does not consult anyone when He makes or unmakes, or when he gives or takes away; He alone knows His *qudrat*; He alone is the doer. He watches everyone and bestows His grace on whomever He wills."<sup>9</sup> Mere talk does not lead to paradise; salvation lies in right conduct. If you add spice to unlawfully earned food, it does not become lawful (*bala*). Falsehood begets only falsehood.<sup>10</sup> Truth is higher than every thing and the truthful living is the highest way of life.<sup>11</sup>

Guru Nanak did not assign any specific name or gender to God. He used both Hindu and Muslim names for God. Most often God is described by attributes or simply as One or *Oh* meaning 'that' or 'he/she' in the GGS.

In the opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak has



given some of the attributes of God. He starts out describing God as “One and Only” that is Infinite and Ineffable – beyond the reach of human intelligence and comprehension and beyond the scope of religious scriptures.

Neither the *Veda* nor the *Quran* know the mystery.<sup>12</sup> Great is God and exalted is His seat. And His exalted Name is higher than the most exalted. If there were one so great and exalted, only then he would know the Highest of the exalted. How great He is, only God knows Himself. O Nanak, God the merciful, by His grace bestows His gifts.<sup>13</sup> He Himself started the creation. He is the Sole-Creator. There is no second one.<sup>14</sup>

The numerous attributes of God described in GGS are: Everlasting, Truth, Ultimate Reality, Infinite, Ineffable, Unknowable, Sovereign, Enlightener, Bounteous, Loving, Forgiving, Unassisted, Self-Sufficing, Self-Existent, Unborn, Without-Animosity, Transcendent, Immanent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Creator and Controller of the cosmos.

Guru Nanak urges us to incorporate the attributes we comprehend in our lives to become Godlike – God-centered beings (*Gurmukhs*).

In the beginning of his composition of *Japu* on the opening page of GGS, Guru Nanak has described God as *Sach*, meaning Everlasting or Truth. Then in the first stanza of *Japu* on the same page, he has enunciated the purpose of human life:

How could one become a *sachiana* (truthful) – Godlike? And how could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood, which prevents one from becoming a *sachiana*? “By living in harmony with *Hukam* (Divine Law),” says Nanak.<sup>15</sup>

How could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood? Through knowledge based on Truth. When the *yogis* asked Guru Nanak, “Who is your Guru or whose disciple are you?” “Word (Divine knowledge) is the Guru and my mind, which comprehends the Word is the disciple,” replied Guru Nanak.<sup>16</sup> What is needed to understand *Hukam*? It is true knowledge. So a *sachiana* is one who understands the *Hukam*. Who understood the *Hukam*, Galileo or the Pope?

Guru Nanak rejected the concept of hell and heaven, *karma* and transmigration, reincarnation and concept of salvation as implied in other religions. Salvation, in his philosophy, means being one with

God by living in harmony with his *Hukam*. Furthermore, Guru Nanak rejected asceticism, celibacy and the importance of clergy and liturgy in the realization of God. He denounced the exploitation of the masses by the custodians of religion:

*Qazi* (Muslim magistrate) tells lies and accepts bribe. The Brahmin priest practices cruelty and deceit and then bathes ceremoniously. The ignorant *yogi* has lost his way in search of tranquility. All three are spiritually barren.<sup>16a</sup>

God according to Guru Nanak does not live in a far off place called heaven; He resides in every heart. Guru Nanak put God at the center of family life by calling Him father, mother, husband, brother, relative and friend. He advocated householder's life, as it is the householder who sustains human society : One who earns honest living through hard work and practises charity recognizes the righteous path<sup>17</sup> and realizes God while enjoying worldly pleasures<sup>18</sup>. He urged people to emulate the Creator by making positive contributions to the world and warned against life-negating tendencies : Never bow at the feet of those who claim to be divines but live at the charity of others.<sup>19</sup>

He rejected the notion of Divine rights of kings or that kings are reflection of God on earth or that they are the promoter and protector of religion. He denounced the unjust, cruel and bigoted rulers of his time: The rulers are like ferocious tigers and their officials as wild dogs, who harass and persecute the innocent subjects.<sup>20</sup> Unless the petitioner offers bribe, even the king does not accept the petition. If someone petitions only in the name of God (justice), nobody listens to him / her.<sup>21</sup> The kings perform religious duties for selfish interests and practice charity for heavenly rewards.<sup>22</sup> The righteous one who keeps God in mind should sit on the throne.<sup>23</sup> Only the righteous one who has control (over lust, anger, greed, attachment and self-centeredness) should occupy the throne.<sup>24</sup>

Guru Nanak rejected the idea that woman is inferior to man. He condemned the persecution and humiliation to which women were subjected. Woman was relegated to the status of a man's shoe in the Indian society. Both Hinduism and Islam sanction the inferiority of woman. In both religions, rulers are the protector and enforcer of religious rules and regulations. In his composition extolling womankind, he challenged the custodians of discriminating laws:

“It is the woman who sustains the human race through conception and nurture. It is the woman through whom relations are created. Every one is dependent on woman except the Creator of all. How could women of whom are born sovereigns be considered inferior to man?”<sup>25</sup>

Guru Amardas emphasized the same point by saying that in this world there is only one “Man” and all are His spouses.<sup>26</sup> In other words, for God man and woman are equal. Due to discrimination and maltreatment, women have lost their vitality and become submissive and as a consequence of that men have become brutal.<sup>27</sup>

He rejected the concept of miracles. God according to Guru Nanak is a Rational Being who does not perform miracles. The cosmos is sustained and supported according to God’s *Hukam*. Everything is subject to *Hukam* and nothing is beyond it.<sup>28</sup> Every action and reaction and happening occurs according to *Hukam*. *Hukam* controls the entire activity of the cosmos. It is the ignorance of *Hukam*, which makes people say that such a phenomenon, or happening is a miracle :

I do not believe in the trickery of *tantra* and *mantra* to win God’s affection, I imbibe Him in my heart. Meditation on *Naam* (God’s attributes) is the collyrium that pleases Him. The one who understands the Everlasting One through Guru’s teachings has this insight.<sup>29</sup>

During the invasion of India by Babur, the Lodhi Pathan rulers engaged *pirs* (Muslim holy men) to defeat Babur’s army with their supernatural powers. Guru Nanak was an eyewitness to Babur’s attack on Saidpur. Guru Nanak says, “Not a single Mughal soldier was blinded by the miracle-performing *pirs*.”<sup>30</sup> Guru Nanak denounced the atrocities committed by Babur’s army and held the Lodhis responsible for their defeat. He condemned them for not being just rulers and not making adequate measures to defend the country. “No one will mourn the death of these dogs who have wasted this precious jewel – India.”<sup>31</sup>

Guru Granth Sahib rejects the miracles of virgin birth and resurrection.

The Infinite Lord created human body with beautiful features from father’s semen and mother’s blood (eggs).<sup>32</sup> Mother and father create a child through union according to the *Hukam* of the Creator (biology of reproduction of life).<sup>33</sup> Salvation can’t be obtained without

remembering God as child can't be produced without the union of mother and father.<sup>34</sup>

Birth and death are natural, as it is the *Hukam* (Divine Law) that governs the process of birth and death (biology of the process of death and birth).<sup>35</sup> Kabir, human birth is difficult to attain because the dead person is not born again like a ripe fruit fallen on the ground does not get attached to the branch again.<sup>36</sup>

Neither Guru Nanak nor any of his successors claimed to be a Prophet. They called themselves lowly, insignificant and the humblest of humble servants of God. There is no proper word for Guru in the English language. Moreover, Guru in GGS does not have the same meaning as commonly implied in Hinduism. In GGS, Guru means enlightener (destroyer of ignorance), God, Word (Divine knowledge) and Guru-person. A Guru-person is the disseminator of the Word and sets a Sikh (learner) on the path of righteousness for the realisation of God. Guru Nanak made it abundantly clear in his composition that his Guru (Enlightener) was God and whatever he did was at the command of God :

I was an unemployed minstrel (*dhadi*),  
But the Master gave me an occupation.  
The Master ordered me to sing His praises day and night.  
He called me to His abode of Truth,  
And honored me with a robe of 'propagating His true glory'.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 150

The Gurus did not ask anyone to change his/her religion. They urged people to practise the “true religion” – devotion to God and universal love and respect for all as equal. It is superficial religion – rituals, customs and external symbols that divide people, not the “true religion.” Guru Nanak's proclamation — there is no Hindu or Muslim — means God does not recognise the labels people wear, but their actions. He urged Hindus to be good Hindus and Muslims to be good Muslims by seeing God everywhere and in all. He explained to people the meaning of “true religion” using their religions and occupations as examples:

Make truth the first prayer, honest living the second one, practice of charity the third one, the cleansing of the mind of evil thoughts the fourth one and adoration and worship of God the fifth one.  
And let good deeds become your Kalima, the article of your faith.

Otherwise, by practising hypocrisy, one becomes false through and through.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 141

Let mercy be your mosque, faith be your prayer mat, honest living be your Quran, and circumcision be fidelity to your wife, and right conduct as your fast. This will make you a true Muslim. Make pious work your Kaba, truth your teacher, good deeds your prayer and recognize rosary as God's Will. This conduct of yours will bring you honor in the court of God.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 140

When the Brahmin priest insisted that he must wear a sacred thread mandated by religious tradition, Guru Nanak replied:

Consider compassion as cotton, contentment as the thread, continence as knot and truth as the twist thereof. O Pundit, a thread of this type elevates the inner-self — conscience. If you have such a one, then put it on me.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 471

*Yogis* (ascetics) used to look down upon the householders. Guru Nanak admonished them by saying:

Then, sir, why do you go from door to door begging alms! Why not make contentment your earrings, begging bowl your modesty, meditation on God as the ashes smeared on your bodies and the thought of death as begging robes. If you do this, sir, then you will find perfect tranquility.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 6

To a hard-working farmer, he explained the path to God-realization as:

Consider your mind to be a farmer, your deeds to be your occupation, your body as the land, your efforts as the water, God's Name as the seed, contentment as the furrowing, and humility as the fence. Then play the game of love with God, the seed will sprout and the bountiful crop of God's love will fill your heart.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 595

Ecumenism – bringing all together under 'One and Only' God is the underlying principle of Nanak's philosophy, which brought Hindus and Muslims together. The message of ecumenism echoes throughout the pages of GGS. A follower of Nanak's philosophy is a world citizen. The whole world belongs to him and he belongs to the whole world :

None is our enemy, or stranger to us; getting along with all is our creed.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 1299

O my Beloved, all claim partnership with You, no one looks at You as a stranger.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 97

Recognize all human beings as one family.

– *Sawayae*, Patshahi 10

May the glory of Thy Name - the philosophy of Nanak - prevail and prosper forever and forever - and may Thy Will be done wherein lies the good of all.

*Ardas* (Sikh congregational prayer)

Guru Nanak was a *pir* to the Muslims and *guru* to the Hindus. A mosque built by Guru Hargobind Sahib is preserved as a historical site in Punjab.<sup>37</sup> Pir Budhu Shah, a well-known divine sacrificed two sons and many followers in a battle Guru Gobind Singh fought against the diehard defenders of casteism – Rajput rulers of Shivalik Hills.<sup>38</sup>

It is noteworthy that there are no direct quotes or passages either from *Quran* or Hindu scriptures in the GGS. On the other hand, Guru Arjun Dev honored Indian divines of diverse background whose thoughts are compatible with Nanak's philosophy by incorporating their writings in the AGGS (Aad Guru Granth Sahib).

The practise of male circumcision and slaughter of animals or birds for food in *kosher* or *halal* style is questioned in hymns addressed to Muslims in GGS.

Dear brother, circumcision may be for the love of woman. I don't believe that it has anything to do with the realization of God. If God wanted me to be a Muslim, He would have sent me in the world circumcised. If circumcision makes a man Muslim, what about a woman who can't be circumcised? My wife is my life partner and always stands by my side. How can I leave her, it is better for me to remain a Hindu !

– Guru Granth Sahib, p 477

O *mullah*, on the one hand, you say that *Khuda* (God) is present in all living beings, but, on the other, you kill a hen as a sacrifice to *Khuda*. Is not *Khuda* present in the hen? Did not *Khuda* create the hen? What kind of sacrifice are you making? O *mullah*, you preach in the name of *Khuda*, but in your own mind you are not sure

what *Khuda* wants?

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1350

Guru Nanak's description of Sun and Moon as lamps in his composition of *Arti* is not about the source of light of Moon or Sun; it is about the beauty of the cosmos.<sup>39</sup> He was telling the idol worshippers that God is the creator and source of all beauty; He does not need man-made decorations to adore Him. God's adoration is love for Him and His creation. Only a poet can appreciate the beauty of this composition, that is why Tagore, a Nobel Laureate poet, described this composition as international anthem.

Guru Nanak answered a wide range of questions about the creation of universe (creation) :

What was the moment, time, date, day, season and month when the universe was created?

Had the Pandits known it, they would have recorded it in the Puranas. Had the writers of Quran known it, they would have recorded it in the Quran. Nor do the yogis know the lunar date, day, season and month when the creation came into being.

Only the Creator knows when the universe was created.<sup>40</sup>

#### WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE UNIVERSE ?

After an immense and tiring search, the authors of *Vedas* concluded that there are hundreds of thousands nether worlds under nether worlds and skies above skies. The Semitic texts say there are eighteen thousand worlds, but their Creator is One.

However, the universe is so vast that it is beyond the scope of counting – one would run out of numbers if one were to undertake the counting. Nanak salutes the Great One, as He alone knows the vastness of the universe.<sup>41</sup>

#### HOW WAS THE UNIVERSE CREATED ?

By God's *Hukam* (Divine Law), the creation came into being but the *Hukam* can't be described.<sup>42</sup> In the beginning, there was only God and His Will (*Hukam*) and for millions and trillions of years God was in a state of absolute stillness – Impenetrable, Invisible Transcendence.<sup>43</sup> When He willed, He created the world.<sup>44</sup> With the command of one Word, He created the expanse with myriad of entities.<sup>45</sup> From the Unmanifest, He became Manifest.<sup>46</sup>

**WHY GOD CREATED CREATION?**

It is for the God-conscious that He has fashioned this earth<sup>47</sup> to practise righteousness<sup>48</sup> and to serve Him.<sup>49</sup>

**IS THE CREATION UNREAL?**

O Nanak, True is the creation of the True One.<sup>50</sup> True are Your continents and True are Your firmaments. True are Your worlds and True are Your creations.<sup>51</sup>

**IS THE CREATION ETERNAL?**

God destroys and creates keeping all ever in mind.<sup>52</sup> The creation and destruction of the creation has occurred many times, but the Infinite Creator remains unaffected.<sup>53</sup>

**HOW WAS LIFE CREATED?**

The True One created air (gases) which in turn produced water. Water created all life and the True One is present in all.<sup>54</sup> Life is sustained by water, earth which supplies the basic elements and air. The role of water, earth and air in the creation, nurture and sustainment of life is depicted by Guru Nanak as that of father, mother and Guru, respectively.<sup>55</sup> Human life, as we know it, passed through many phases and forms of evolution before reaching the *Homo sapien* stage.<sup>56</sup> It took a very long time for the human life to evolve. Human birth is your chance to meet the Creator.<sup>57</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The source of the philosophy of Guru Nanak is his own compositions enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib, and not what others wrote about him. The primary objective of his philosophy is to transform man into a moral man – a God-centered being (*sachiaara*).

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**REFERENCES**

- 1 References in this article are based on the standard *bir*, comprising of 1430 pages, published by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. M = Mahla, i.e. succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak; for the compositions of *bhagats*, M is substituted by the name of the *bhagat*; p = page of the GGS).
- 2 GGS, M 1, p 350: ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥



- 3 Ibid, M 1, p 907: ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥
- 4 Ibid, M 5, p 966: ਅੰਦਰੁ ਵਿਧਾ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਡਿਠੋਮਿ } ਨਾਨਕ ਰਵਿਆ ਹਭ ਬਾਇ ਵਣਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਣਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣਿ ਰੋਮਿ ॥
- 5 Ibid, M 5, p 611: ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥
- 6 Ibid, M 1, p 72: ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭਸੈ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥
- 7 Ibid, M 1, p 663: ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
- 8 Ibid, Kabir, p 483: ਅਲਹੁ ਗੈਬੁ ਸਗਲ ਘਟ ਭਤਿਰਿ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਲੇਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹੂੰ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੈ ਕਹੈ ਕਬੀਰ ਪੁਕਾਰੀ ॥
- 9 Grewal, J S, *The Sikhs Of The Punjab*, 1994, p 33 (AGGS, M 1, p 53).
- 10 Grewal, J S. *The Sikhs Of The Punjab*, 1994, p 33 (AGGS, M 1, p 141).
- 11 GGS, M 1, p 62: ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥
- 12 Ibid, M 1, p 1021: ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਤਾ ॥
- 13 Singh, I, *Japji And Other Sikh Scriptures*, 1986, p 67 (GGS, M 1, p 5).
- 14 GGS, M 4, p 11: ਤੂੰ ਆਪੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
- 15 Ibid, M 1, p 1: ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥
- 16 Ibid, M 1, p 942- 943: ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥
- 16a. Ibid, M 1, p 662: ਕਾਦੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ ॥ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਅੰਧੁ ॥ ਤੀਨੇ ਓਜਾੜੇ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ॥
- 17 Ibid, M 1, p 1245: ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥
- 18 Ibid, M 5, p 522: ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੂੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥
- 19 Ibid, M 1. P 1245: ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਾਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥
- 20 Ibid, M 1 p 1288: ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥
- 21 Ibid, M 1, p 350: ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
- 22 Ibid, M 1 p 1024: ਰਾਜੇ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਥਰਾਇ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਬੰਧੇ ਦਾਨੁ ਕਰਾਇ ॥
- 23 Ibid, M 1 992: ਰਾਜਾ ਤਖਤਿ ਟਿਕੈ ਗੁਣੀ ਭੈ ਪੰਚਾਇਣ ਰਤੁ ॥
- 24 Ibid, M 1 p 1039: ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ ॥ ਪੰਚ ਸਮਾਏ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪਾਇਕ ॥
- 25 Ibid, M 1 p 473: ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥...ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥
- 26 Ibid, M 3, p 591: ਇਸ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਏਕੁ ਜੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥
- 27 Ibid, M 1, p 1243: ਰੰਨਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਬੋਧੀਆ ਪੁਰਸ ਹੋਏ ਸਈਆਦ ॥
- 28 Ibid, M 1, p 1: ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
- 29 Ibid, M 1, p 766: ਤੰਤੁ ਮੰਤੁ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਝੈ ਗੁਰਸਬਦੀ ਸਚੁ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥
- 30 Ibid, M 1, p 418: ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥ ਬਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮੁ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਰੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥
- 31 Ibid, p 360: ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ ॥
- 32 Ibid, M 1, p, 1022: ਮਾ ਕੀ ਰਕਤੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਿਦੁ ਧਾਰਾ ॥ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਪਾਰਾ ॥
- 33 Ibid, M 1, p 989: ਮਿਲਿ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਤਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ॥
- 34 Ibid, Kabir, p 872: ਜੈਸੇ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਾਲੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਬਿੰਬ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੈਸੇ ਕਪਰੇ ਧੋਈ ॥

- 35 Ibid, M 1, p 472: ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥
- 36 Ibid, Kabir, p 1366: ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਬਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਕੇ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਹਿ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਲਾਗਹਿ ਡਾਰ ॥
- 37 Singh, S, *The Sikhs In History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2001, p 46.
- 38 Mehboob, H S, *Selje Rachio Khalsa* (Punjabi), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000, p 370- 371.
- 39 GGS, M 1. P 663: ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਬਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ ॥ ਧੂਪੁ ਮਲਆਨਲੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੇ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੂਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ ॥
- 40 Ibid, M 1, p 4: ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥...ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥
- 41 Ibid, M 1, p 5: ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥ ...ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥
- 42 Ibid, M 1, p 1: ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥
- 43 Ibid, M 1, p 1035: ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਪਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥ (Massey, J, *Guru Nanak's Concept of Creator and Creation, Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 1994, January, p 43-57.)
- 44 Ibid, M 1, p 1035: ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥
- 45 Ibid, M 1, p 3: ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥
- 46 Ibid, p M 1, 1035: ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਅਰੰਭੇ ਗੁਪਤਹੁ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਦਾ ॥
- 47 Ibid, M 1, p 941: ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਚੈ ਸਾਜੀ ॥
- 48 Ibid, M 1, p 1033: ਧਰਤਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਧਰੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾ ॥
- 49 Ibid, M 1, p 142: ਫੁਰਮਾਨੀ ਹੈ ਕਾਰ ਖਸਮਿ ਪਠਾਇਆ ॥
- 50 Ibid M 1, p 7: ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਸਾਚੀ ਕਾਰ ॥
- 51 Ibid, M 1, p 463: ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਸਚੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥ ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੋਅ ਸਚੇ ਆਕਾਰ ॥
- 52 Ibid, M 1, p 354: ਢਾਹਿ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਧਰੇ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥
- 53 Ibid, M 5, p 276: ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥
- 54 Ibid, M 1, p 19: ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਨ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥
- 55 Ibid, M 1, p 8: ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥
- 56 Ibid, M 5, p 1388: ਪਸੁ ਪੰਖੀ ਬਿਰਖ ਅਸਥਾਵਰ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਜੋਨਿ ਭਰਮਿਓ ਅਤਿ ਭਾਰੀ ॥
- 57 Ibid, M 5, p 176 : ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ ॥

## ALIENATION OF SIKH YOUTHS OF NORTH AMERICA<sup>†</sup>

PAVNA KAUR\*

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The main purpose of this paper is to document the serious alienation that has taken place amongst second generation Sikh youths of North America.

The second part of this paper will suggest remediation techniques by using the concept of mind (spiritual) map developed out of the concepts taken from Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The concept of alienation has been well documented by Dr Liang, a world famous British Psychiatrist in his book *The Divided Self* (Penguin 1971). According to Dr Liang, the root cause of alienation is Ontological Insecurity. The Sikh youths may be passing through the following stages while becoming alienated:

1. Cultural Curiosity (Zone of Prominal Development)
2. Role Dancing as suggested by the models who seek vicarious satisfaction
3. Embarrassment and Ambivalence
4. Negativity and Resentment, and Acquiring a distance from the First Generation Culture
5. Free Floating Stage—Grieving and Resentment
6. Identification with Dominant Culture
7. Developing strategies to prevent total engulfment (losing oneself)

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<sup>†</sup> Paper presented at the International Conference on Compilation, Authority, Status and Universal Message of Guru Granth Sahib on May 1, 2004, Los Angeles, USA and May 22, 2004, Toronto, Canada, under the title : *Alienation of Sikh Youths of North America — Its remediation through historically developing a “cognitive mind map” of Sikh identity formation as evolved by Sikh Gurus in Guru Granth Sahib.*

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8. Attempting to develop bicultural identity to stop becoming an 'It'— a mythological person — by focusing on:
  - a. Career Aspiration
  - b. Home Environment
  - c. School, College, Credentials
  - d. Spiritual Exposure through transliberal awareness (Buddhism/Sikhism)
9. Suffering from identity crisis produced by paradoxical relationship bordering on desire for complete independence from parents and their culture to co-dependency.
10. Fear of becoming a vehicle of personality that is not his/her own (Traces of schizoid personality)
11. Fear of Generalized dreadness compensated by self love, trips to resort areas, flashy cars with expensive sound system, a non-spiritual and a-political narcissistic living, yoga, gym, jogging and occasional pub crawling. Reality living is postponed till marriage, which is a milestone in alienation depending upon the personality, upbringing and race of the partner.
12. Paring alienation is decreased by 'attempting' to function in North American environment by creating a subjective, bicultural identity — a 'co-co nut' reality and living in the fear that it may crack up!

The above stages of alienation were themes in the narratives of many youths, the present author interviewed in depth. The following findings are shared and discussed:

The North American parents are "still looking for a nail, because all they know is the use of a hammer." They are not aware that the givens of Punjab of raising children are not valid in North America because the cultural paradigm has shifted and language has changed producing two sets of people living with two realities under the same roof.

Some children felt that they were not part of the Sikh collectivity and socio-spiritual life. The atmosphere of the gurdwara, disrespect for the democratic ways of running various organizations by semi-educated power-hungry, non-spiritual 'elites', paying lip service to youth activities, the Sikh leaders conduct all ceremonies in a language (Punjabi) which is not understood by the majority of youths. It creates a negative valence in the youths' motivation and they show their

resentment by refusing to participate in spiritual activities. This sense of estrangement from gurdwara makes the youths grow up spiritually non-anchored, adrift and some get mystified by the spiritual heritage of the dominant culture and seek identification with it through false consciousness.

It was clear that severe mystification did not let them become aware of their oppression and its political implications. They were not aware that oppression and deception (mystification) produce alienation and psychological conditions which could be an existential anxiety, severe depression, powerlessness, hopelessness, suicidal ideation and schizoid living. They were not aware that spiritual vacuum has produced in them a minor narcissistic personality, which was getting manifested in active search for self-gratification, atomized non-relational individualism, lost desire for permanent bonding and spirituality. It appeared that they had internalized selectively 'materialist' aspects of Western culture.

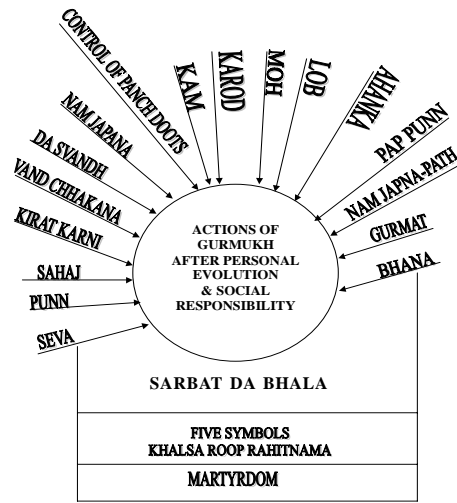
It must be pointed out they do internalize 'good' aspects of Western culture which are honesty, less opinionatedness, pragmatic living and hard work. In this respect, they do better than their parents.

Guru Granth Sahib has influenced Sikh psyche since it was installed in Harmandir Sahib on in 1604. Guru Granth is written in Punjabi, Hindi, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dakhni, Bengali, Marathi, Sanskrit and Persian. Besides containing the bani of the Sikh Gurus, it also has the shabads of saints such as Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Ravi Das, Trilochan and Jaidev.

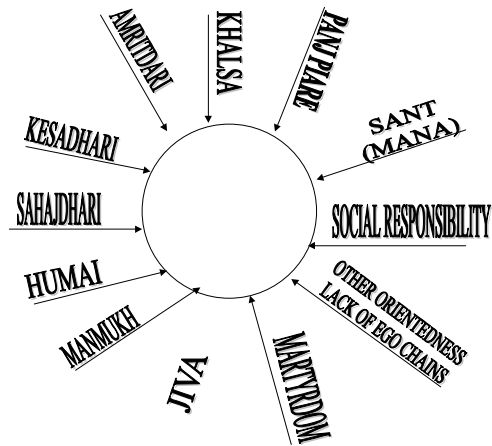
The themes of Guru Granth Sahib (the eternal Guru of the Sikhs) are concepts of God and methods of experiencing 'It' and rules of morality.

For the purpose of this paper we would concentrate on the mind map under the following titles:

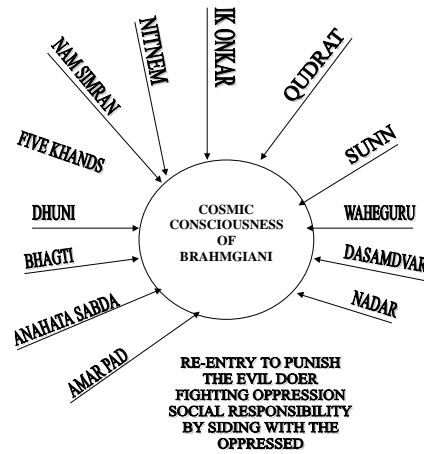
1. Personal Evolution as mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib
2. *Karma* (Action) as depicted in Guru Granth Sahib
3. Cosmic Consciousness as developed and experienced through Guru Granth Sahib.



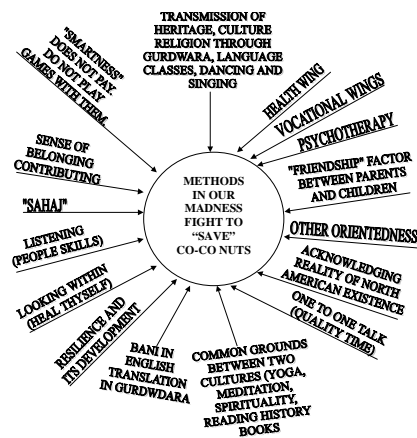
MIND MAP OF KARMA



MIND MAP OF PERSONAL EVOLUTION



MIND MAP OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS



REMEDIATION

### FINAL WORD

This is an attempt to look at alienation as a significant factor in the life space of second generation children. Various suggestions using mind map techniques to help North American children to reframe their Sikh psyche have been presented. Bicultural Sikh identity can be formed. This will happen with continuous inter-generational dialogue and compromise of certain cultural and spiritual values within the homes, gurdwaras and school environment.

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## WHO AM I ? – A REBUTTAL\*

JARNAIL SINGH\*\*

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At the outset, I must admit that I was taken in by the title of this write-up. I thought it is about the metaphysical question that Sufi poet Bulleh Shah raised in his poetry, but to my utter dismay it turned out to be mutterings of a confused mind. The author starts with a popular truism— God created human beings in His own image—and asserts that *Gurbani* or Guru Granth Sahib (GGS) supports this view. This is absolutely wrong. *Gurbani* does not say or support the view that God created human beings in his own image. On the other hand, *Gurbani* says that entire cosmos is the creation and an image of God, who permeates the entire creation. It is further stated that human beings need to follow the advice of a Guru to tell them what is right or wrong.

Ironically, the author spends all his energies further down his essay, to prove that dictates of Guru Gobind Singh about 5 Ks are now obsolete, and it is better if Sikhs disregard them now. The author gives us another surprise when he describes *Amritdhari*, *Sahajdhari* and *Patit* as castes among Sikhs. Casteism is a specific characteristic of Indian society and introduction of 5 Ks was one of the many steps our Gurus took to eradicate this disease from our society. But in the opinion of the author this now is the main cause of casteism among Sikhs and hence it is better if Sikhs ignore the dictates of the Tenth Master regarding 5 Ks. This only highlights his ignorance of the caste system in our society. He is confusing caste with appearance.

The author indicts those who say that a Sikh should be *saabat*

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\* This is a response to an article that appeared in the *Sikh Bulletin*, June-July 2004, under the same title by Bawa Singh Jagdev.

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*soorat* of creating divisions in humanity. It does not require much reasoning to see that this is an absolutely baseless and irrational statement. First of all the concept of *saabat soorat* has been preached and practised by all the Sikh Gurus and it is wrong to say that this is being preached by only a section of Sikhs. Then it is an indisputable fact that *saabat soorat* is the natural appearance of human beings. So, if any one is guilty of dividing humanity, it is those who play with and alter this natural appearance.

Not surprisingly the author is disturbed by some of his questions because he is seeking answers to these questions from his own biased mind. If he had gone to the shelter of the Guru, he would have definitely found convincing answers by studying and contemplating on GGS. GGS states in crystal clear terms that outward appearance has no connection whatsoever with the spiritual progress of a person. Appearance is just like the uniform that kids wear when they go to the school. The uniform of kids at school does not help them in any way in becoming more intelligent or smart in studies. But this does not mean that uniform has got no significance for the school or the kids. In the same way the *saabat soorat* appearance for Sikhs has its own significance and is indispensable. The unshorn hairs are often described as stamp of the Guru. This, in a sense, explains the significance of the appearance and why it is indispensable for the Sikhs. A stamp on a document is the proof of its authenticity and tells us who it belongs to. The stamp in itself is not the document. Nor does the stamp change in any way whatever has been written in the document. For example, any document with a stamp of Singh Sabha International would tell us that this is an authentic document from SSI. Whatever has been written in the document is to be judged on the basis of the constitution and objectives of SSI. In the same manner, actions of all those who don Sikh appearance are to be judged on the touchstone of GGS. Any document even though it is absolutely in accordance with the constitution and objectives of SSI, will require its stamp to be called a SSI document. In the same way, a person is required to have the *saabat soorat* stamp to be recognized as a Sikh.

The author is right when he said that purity or perfection in life does not come by having unshorn hair etc. But he forgets that purity or perfection in life also does not come by trimming or shaving your

hair. Sikhism is very clear about it. If we prepare a list of good persons, the one for those who trim or shave their hairs will not be longer than the one for those who kept their hair unshorn. All good persons are not necessarily Sikhs. All Sikhs are not good persons. Sikhism has the golden history of recognizing and honoring good persons from all religions and cultures.

What is really strange is the insistence of those who abandon Sikh appearance to be recognised, called and accepted as real Sikhs. If they are good, Sikhism will recognise them any way. It has been stated at many places in GGS that what matters at the end of the day is not your appearance, but good deeds. If a person who is *saabat soorat* and claims to be Sikh is doing something which is not in accordance with the teachings of our Gurus, then he should be exposed and brought to book. It is ridiculous and absurd to give examples of such persons to build a case for discarding the *saabat soorat* appearance. It is an indisputable fact that there are many people roaming about in this world who look like Sikhs and claim to be Sikhs but are not following the Sikh philosophy enshrined in GGS. But this does not mean something is wrong with the *saabat soorat* concept of a Sikh. If people in uniform do something against the law, then it is never recommended that the uniform should be discarded. Those who commit a crime while in uniform are punished as per the law. The same rule should apply here. If a *saabat soorat* Sikh is not following the advice of GGS, then he should be punished as per the Sikh tenets or rule of the land. It is irrational and illogical to recommend that *saabat soorat* appearance is no good, as some *saabat soorat* persons are criminals. It is like throwing away the baby with the bath water.

*Saabat soorat* appearance is a must to become a Sikh, but you do not become a Sikh just by having a *saabat soorat* appearance. You must follow the philosophy of GGS in your life to be a Sikh. Let us understand this by taking an example from sports. You do not become a Real Madrid or Arsenal soccer player simply by wearing their trade mark costumes. But even if you are an excellent soccer player, you have to wear a Real Madrid outfit to be recognized as their player.

The author calls the *saabat soorat* “an age-old culturally defined tradition and symbol” that destroys the universal appeal of Sikhism. He admits that the basic tenets of Sikhism are eternal and immutable,

but does not describe what these tenets are. In his opinion, culture and traditions change with time and the underlying message is that Sikhs should also change with time and abdicate the *saabat soorat* appearance. In his opinion, our Gurus also changed with time. This position has serious implications as it contradicts what we read in GGS that all the ten Gurus preached and practiced the same philosophy.

He gives some funny examples to prove his point. In his opinion, Guru Nanak never advocated use of arms, but later on Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh took to arms. This only underscores his ignorance of the philosophy of GGS. I would like to ask him the question: Did Guru Nanak ever preach non-violence? The second example given by him is the escape of Guru Gobind Singh discarding what he calls Sikh uniform and disguising as a Muslim *pir*. Here again I would like to ask him a question. Is there anything like Sikh uniform? The only dress code for Sikhs is to wear underwear and turban (for males only). The author needs to refresh his knowledge of Sikh tenets and Sikh history. The escape of Guru Gobind Singh from the battlefield at Chamkaur is singular example of extraordinary courage in human history and of military planning and strategy. Did Guru Gobind Singh discard *saabat soorat* to disguise as a Muslim *pir*?

It is praiseworthy and heartening to note that the author helps foreign students to know more about Sikhism. However, it looks like that he has ignored the most conspicuous aspect of Sikhism, the *Saabat soorat* appearance, in his booklet. That is the reason the students have so many misgivings about this aspect of our religion. The student would have got answer to her questions if he had asked her to analyze why she wears a uniform in her school. The explanation given by him will certainly confuse the student more as she progresses in her understanding of Sikh religion from Sikh history and study of GGS. To say that *Sikh*, *Singh* and *Khalsa* are different categories of Sikhs is wrong. As per his own definition of a *Singh*, he should not have 'Singh' in his name. His assertion that the suffix 'Singh' was added to the names of only those Sikhs who joined Guru Gobind Singh's army to fight against Aurangzeb is absurd and ridiculous and shows that he has poor knowledge of Sikh history. He contradicts himself in the next line when he says that one of the reasons of this addition/change in name was to get rid of the caste system. So if we combine his two

statements then it would mean that Guru Gobind Singh wanted to eradicate casteism only from those Sikhs who joined his army. I wonder what will be his answer to the student if she asks how come he has got 'Singh' in his name.

The implicit message here is that the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak are contradictory. This is what is being preached by forces that are bent upon devouring Sikhism. It looks like that the author has not tried to understand the concept of *Amrit* and *Khalsa* as described in GGS. This, in my opinion, is the main reason for all the confusion in his mind. He is confusing *Amrit* with *Khande di Pabul*. *Amrit* as per GGS is the teachings of *Gurbani* and we drink it when we follow these teachings in life. *Patit*, *Sahajdhari*, *Amritdhari* are, ideally speaking, stages in the spiritual development of a Sikh. However, those who have taken *Khande di Pabul* are often called *Amritdhari* because they are supposed to follow the teachings of *Gurbani* just as we call all kids in uniform students. There are kids who wear the school uniform, but instead of going to the school they go to cinemas or other places. Similarly, there can be and there are scores of persons who have taken *Khande di Pabul*, but have not been able to drink *Amrit*. Just as the performance of a student is not judged by his uniform but by his score in the examination. Similarly, our Guru has told us in no uncertain terms that a Sikh will be judged upon not by his appearance, but on the basis of his/her actions in life.

In the opinion of this author "religion is not a game for which rules can be set once for all." However, only a couple of paragraphs earlier he stated that tenets of Sikhism are eternal and immutable. He then goes on to say that it is the personal choice of a person to trim his beard or not, and no one has the right to interfere in his choice. It is fine. But the problem arises only when such a person insists to be recognized as Sikh of the Guru who made it mandatory for his Sikhs to adorn unshorn hair. The author refers to the dress code time and again in this write-up. As far as I know, there is no dress code except the underwear and turban (for males only) prescribed for Sikhs. These items easily fit in with any dress. You can be a Sikh by wearing any dress. A Sikh from an African, South American or European society is not supposed to wear a Punjabi dress. So, the ire of the author on this point is misdirected and unwarranted. I agree with the author

that some vested interests have reduced 5 Ks to mere rituals. But what is required is to tell the world the real significance of these items. And if we discard these items or compare them with rituals of other religions we are falling in the trap of these people.

The author expresses his fear that future generations will read about Sikhs only in history books and rings a wake up call for every Sikh. In my opinion it would have happened long time ago but for the introduction of 5 Ks. Our Gurus were great visionaries. They put their final seal on GGS in such a manner that no one can alter or interpolate in it. Similarly they have made *saabat soorat* appearance our registered trademark and patented it for us for all times to come. A *saabat soorat* Sikh is required to follow in his life what is written in GGS. He or she can be questioned and punished if they do not follow it. But no one can ask or question a person who has discarded 5 Ks as to why his/her actions are not in accordance with teachings of GGS. He or she will retort back 'it is my personal life and none of your business.'

At the end, I feel it is my duty to confess that I am not an *Amritdhari Sikh*. I can be easily described as a *Patit* or some may be generous enough to call me a *Sehajdhari*. I can only say that I am on my journey of becoming a Sikh. So whatever I have written above is not an attempt to justify my appearance.

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*Unlike the scriptures of other creeds, they (Guru Granth Sahib) do not contain love stories or accounts of wars waged for selfish considerations. They contain sublime truths, the study of which cannot but elevate the reader spiritually, morally, and socially. There is not the least tinge of sectarianism in them. They teach the highest and purest principle that serve to bind man to man and inspire the believer with an ambition to serve his fellow men, to sacrifice all and die for their sake.*

— M A Macauliffe  
*The Sikh Religion*

## FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN SIKHISM\*

DALJEET SINGH

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The question of human freedom and necessity has been a difficult one in all religions and philosophic systems. Empirical logic has failed to resolve this problem. And yet the ethical and moral needs of man are intimately linked with this issue. All religious systems must, therefore, furnish an answer to this basic question. It is our purpose here to give the Gurus' views on the subject.

As uncompromising theists, the Gurus obviously do not subscribe to any notion of materialism or mechanism. In their system, prayer, love and grace have a primary significance and place. Their ideas *ipso facto* repudiate all notions about determinism or necessity.

One of the greatest contributions of the Gurus is their idea of God being a Creator who, as a God of Will and Attributes, is helping an evolutionary movement towards a being who is God-conscious. Let us try to elaborate and understand the significance of this concept.

The idea of determinism is only a logical abstraction from our daily experience of cause and effect. As already stated, when pursued backwards, this idea of every effect being determined by a cause breaks down. Perforce we come to a dead end as to what is the first cause. To this Causeless cause or un-created Creative cause, the Gurus give the name of a Creator who has a Will. A Creator with a Will implies freedom to create on the part of the Self-created Creator. Otherwise, the very idea of a Creator with a Will would be a contradiction in terms. In other words, God has a Free Will. God is a Being who is the Master of the ways of His functioning and we do not know them. He is Free. He

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\* Reproduced from *Sikhism – A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, p. 213-217.

is not determined by the laws of our world.

The Gurus envisage a clear process of evolution in this world. Man, according to the Gurus, is the highest evolved being. He is not only conscious, but he is also self-conscious. He has a clear capacity for discernment, reflection and deliberation. This is an attribute higher than that of other animals. Life affords man an opportunity to become a God-centered being. "This alone is your opportunity; seek within".<sup>1</sup> "You have been given a human body; this is your opportunity to meet God."<sup>2</sup>

The very suggestion or persuasion to avail oneself of this opportunity implies a freedom and capacity on the part of man to do so. The Gurus indicate a clear movement from comparative determinism to freedom taking place in this world. From apparently mechanistic matter, there appeared conscious life. Then appeared the self-conscious man with an increasing capacity for choice, deliberation and consequent freedom. The final achievement is to be a God-conscious person, the creative instrument of Free God or a living centre of comparative freedom. Seen in this light, the Gurus envisage a distinct evolutionary movement from comparative necessity to freedom. The more a person is free and creative, for creation assumes freedom, the nearer is he to God. This is the yardstick with which the Gurus measure a man and his progress.

In addition, there is the moral argument, which, in a way, is co-extensive with the argument of freedom. We have seen that the Gurus call God as the Ocean of Attributes and Values and the True Judge. If everyone were governed by rigid determinism, the question of any moral assessment would not arise. In a deterministic world, words like 'true and false', 'right or wrong', 'good or bad', 'helpful or harmful', have no meaning; nor would words like 'ought and ought not', 'regret and happiness', 'wisdom and folly', 'just and unjust', have any significance in the case of man. These terms are never applied to the virtually determined and mechanistic world of matter. And, yet, the mystic system of the Gurus is deeply moral and ethical in its content. God is called the True One, Good, Just, Benevolent and Shelter of the shelterless. The Gurus call our world the very place of righteousness. The assessment and approval of man are based on the character of man's deeds. If human actions were predetermined, they could hardly

be called his deeds, much less could they have a moral character or be judged by the yardstick of righteousness. No one can be morally assessed unless he has the freedom of choice which he exercises voluntarily. The Gurus' entire emphasis is to persuade and exhort man to exercise the right choice. They blame man for his sufferings and frustrations since these follow from his wrong choice of deeds. The way out is to be moral and righteous, i.e., to be more free and responsible. It is by this choice of freedom and righteousness that man becomes God-centered, a synonym for release and freedom from comparative necessity and determinism.

The Gurus do not accept the doctrine of *Karma*, if it is to be understood in any fatalistic or deterministic sense. Their idea is of a Creative God, with a Will and Purpose, who is greatly concerned with the improvement and evolution of His creation and the imperfect beings. Guru Granth Sahib, clearly controverts the deterministic *Karmic* doctrine by saying that, "When there was no universe, how did the first being inherit *Karma*, or who created *Karma* initially."<sup>3</sup> "You say that body is made of five elements, from where were the elements created? You say that man is bound by his *Karma*, who created the law of *Karma*?"<sup>4</sup> "When there was neither father, nor mother, nor form, nor *Karma*, when neither were you there, nor was I there, what came from where? When there was no *Veda* and *Shastra*, from where did *Karma* originate?"<sup>5</sup> The idea of creativity and growth are an integral part of the Gurus' view of life and morality. And then, there is the basic concept of Grace overriding and controverting the doctrine of *Karma*.

The Gurus distinctly say that God creates man and grants him freedom to decide the course of his life. "Lord created the world and left it free to do as it wills."<sup>6</sup> "According to their deeds, some are near and some far from God."<sup>7</sup> "Man is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination."<sup>8</sup> "Vices are like chains around our necks, and virtues the only friend."<sup>9</sup>

All these quotations from Guru Granth Sahib clearly envisage freedom on the part of man to make any decisions he likes with regard to his deeds. Had man been rigidly governed by his past and the course of his present and future actions been determined by his previous deeds, all these exhortations to man to reshape his future would be



without the importance and significance the Gurus attach to them. Evidently, the Gurus do not accept the validity of any *Karmic* or deterministic law. On the other hand, they consistently stress the freedom of man to determine the course of his activities.

No doubt, there are sayings like, “why blame others, it is our own doings that lead us astray.”<sup>10</sup> It is also true that the idea of “as you sow, so shall you reap” is there. But, all this only fortifies the principle of free will and the moral responsibility of man. There is nothing in Guru Granth Sahib to endorse the deterministic *Karmic* doctrine of traditional Brahminism. This concept has been specifically refuted in Guru Granth Sahib. The idea of “as you sow, so shall you reap,” is just an appeal and exhortation to the limited sovereignty of man, so as to invoke his sense of reason, initiative, responsibility and growth.

Another point also needs clarification. It has been stated by the Gurus that everything happens according to the Will of God. This is just an assertion about the Omnipotence of God which is inherent in any theistic concept. It actually appears in all theistic religions like Islam and Christianity. The *Quran* stresses God’s complete Omnipotence in thoughts like: “His is the command and unto Him ye will be brought back. You cannot will except by the Will of Allah.”<sup>11</sup>, “Whom Allah Wills, he sends astray, and whom He Wills, He places on straight path.”<sup>12</sup> “He created all things and ordained their destinies.”<sup>13</sup> “Everyman’s destiny have we fastened on his neck. It shall be as Allah pleases.”<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, Jesus prayed before his crucifixion, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup be taken away from me. But I want Your Will, not mine.”<sup>15</sup> It only indicates that it is God’s Will that is operative. God is ‘the First and the Last’ both in Christianity and Islam.

He being the Sole Entity, the question of anyone else’s will does not arise. He makes the laws, and, yet, in all theistic religions the emphasis on morality is primary. There is no contradiction between the two ideas. Man has the choice to ignore God’s Will. God being the Ocean of Virtues, His Will is moral. But man can and does flout it. Unless man has the freedom to make decisions, the question of his being responsible or being blamed for evil and sin cannot arise. But, in the Gurus’ system, moral life is the only way to spiritual achievement.

Similarly, it is the chief obligation and characteristic of the superman to lead a life of virtue. It would just be naive to suggest that the concept of the Omnipotence of God and the primacy of God's Will leads to the negation of moral life. Such a deterministic concept is contrary to the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, for the entire responsibility for leading a moral life is on man. In Sikhism, moral life and spiritual life are one and the same. Moral life is the way to the spiritual progress and spiritual life is spontaneously moral.

Even from the last prayer of Jesus it is evident that he could act according to his own will, but he did not want to escape crucifixion if it was God's Will. But he had the option which he exercised in favour of God's Will being done. This is exactly the difference between a theistic system like Sikhism and a pantheistic, monistic system or a deterministic one where man has no responsibility. This is illustrated by the story of a sinner. After his death, he was, because of his misdeeds, barred by Agni-Rudra from entering the realm of the sun or heaven. But the man's reply to the deity was that God being witness to all his deeds and having made him to do everything, he was blameless. The logic of the argument was accepted by the God, and he was admitted into heaven."<sup>16</sup> As against this, in Sikhism, every man is responsible for his deeds. The validity of moral life forms the very fundamental tenet of the Guru's system. The concept of a God of Will does not in any way conflict with the concept of a God of Attributes and Values and One who is Ever-creative. Guru Granth Sahib repeatedly stresses that the responsibility for good or evil acts is that of the individual. This idea is presented ironically when it is said that "with torch in hand, one falls in well."<sup>17</sup> It means that we have both the freedom and the responsibility to avoid vice. It is the character of the choice we make that indicates the level of our growth and the sense of our freedom and responsibility.

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*Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen. The living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in the days of increasing communications between all parts of the world and branches of human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its scriptures, the Guru Granth, will have something special of value to say to the rest of the world.*

– Arnold Toynbee  
Foreword, *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*  
(Publisher : UNESCO)

## **NATIONALITY OF THE SIKHS – EROSION AND EXPANSION –**

**GURDIP SINGH\***

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In the history of a nation, the time span of two decades is not a long period. However, in the case of the Sikh Nation the past two decades, since the holocaust of 1984, is too long a period of neglect and decadence. Because it has been a period which has not only been devoid of any gainful rehabilitative effort by the community but, regrettably, for having generated internal decay.

‘Operation Blue Star’ in June 1984 and other ‘Operations’ followed by virtual genocide of the Sikhs in November 1984 and the killings in Punjab till 1992 are a saga of brutalities against the elevated social stratum strived for and deserved by a minority community. All possible official agencies were sourced for engineering motivated propaganda and instigations for persecution and alienation of the Sikhs. Ignoring the objective social discontent, the bogey of ( fictitious ) secessionist movement was raised to cast the whole community as anti-state and then as terrorists. There has been no formal expression of regret by the Central Government for the Army’s assault on the Golden Temple, Amritsar and other gurdwaras . The juridical cases relating to genocidal decimation of the Sikhs (mainly youth) and widows of November 1984 riots remain unfinalised and the trial of those who were brazenly guilty of organizing the killings has been miscarried, NOT without the official connivance.

The Sikh people had lived as ‘People of Substance’; 1984 events were a watershed for diminution of the Sikh people as ‘No Body’. First, the soul and psyche and then the pride, dignity, and loyalty (to the country) of the Sikhs became the targets. Retrospectively, the

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analysis of 1984 events shows that previously the Central Government had interest in manipulating the virile community for their qualities of martial spirit and agricultural skills, and then the interest of the wily Central Authority was better served by humiliating the haloed minority community to win favour of majority's vote bank.

As a historical parallel, the holocaust with time zero of 1984 is quite comparable to the persecutions of the Sikhs by the Mughal and Afghan forces during the early and mid-eighteenth century. That phase was the immediate post-Guru period and the doctrinally embedded super-human response to those atrocities by the invincible Sikhs, at that juncture, is what truly composed the idealization and the sanctification of the collective 'will' as the Nationality of the Sikhs. The halo of such an exalted Nationality which has been the proud heritage and legacy of the Sikhs stands eroded by the virtual absence of resilience and uncontested response to the carnage and social turbulence of the past two decades.

It needs to be highlighted that the concept of Nationality is different from the concept of defining Nationalism. Nationalism is manifestation of a political principle and is conjugated with, as well as parasitic on, the State. Whereas, the sense of Nationality, which define the categorical self-characterization, may be refracted into two components: one, that grows from religion, tradition, and history; and the other, that constitutes culture, aspirations, system of ideas, accepted signs, associations, institutions, and ways of behaving and communicating. It is the quality and intensity of these convictions and loyalties that lead to the genesis of the voluntaristic solidarity of a group of people claiming their shared membership of a Nationality.

The Sikh Nationality was bestowed by Guru Nanak when he organized the *sangat* giving them an ideology for positive, optimistic, and ethical way of life and for establishing an egalitarian society, thus awakening the consciousness of the divinely endowed, most elevated creature of God in the universe. Such a philosophy of life in spiritual and empirical terms continued to be cultivated by the successive Gurus and it evolved into its full rigor with the tenets of proactive social justice injunctions as an ordained mission of the Khalsa. The force of such a Nationality engenders the Nation, sustains it and is a source of pervasive strength. The Sikh Nationality confers unique identity

(distinct and noble); dignity (heritage of invincibility); universal concerns of conscious psychic space and comfort; and politically untrammelled life chances. Allegiance to this Nationality is sacrosanct and any dilution of it or any isolation from it is antithetical.

It would be quite apposite here to evaluate some of the classic historical achievements which had enabled the Sikhs to nurture the highest traditions of their Nationality *vis a vis* the negativity of the past two decades. Soon after Bada Ghallughara in February 1762, Ahmad Shah Abdali's soldiers had desecrated the Harmandir Sahib. However, in spite of the tremendous loss suffered by the Misls in the battle, they regrouped and within eight months, came to fight at Amritsar, defeated the garrison of the Afghans and then subjected the captured Afghan soldiers to undo the damage and cleanse the holy precincts. Banda Singh Bahadur (in 1710's), imbued with the inspiration transmitted by Guru Gobind Singh, had subdued large portions of Punjab extending from Jamuna to Ravi within a decade. After raising a fortalice of Ram Rauni, thus announcing an intent of the State in 1748, the Misls had forged a base at Lahore within two decades. Even in recent times, the Gurdwara Reform Movement secured its objectives within less than a decade. Contextual to such achievements, the only acts that are comparable during the past two decades are those that correspond with the elimination of Massa Ranghar from the Harmandir Sahib by Sardar Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh.

The Sikh leadership has grossly failed to mobilize the collective energies for reclaiming the Panthic élan, or even the restitution of social equity. Given their demographic advantage in Punjab, the Sikhs should not have remained politically innocuous. It appears that the creation of Punjabi Suba saved the community from political castration but, alas, not from political impotency. The two prime Panthic entities, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal, are in dire straits and have accumulated much dross so as to render themselves morally illegitimate in the consciousness of the Sikhs. The blame squarely rests on the shoulders of 'veteran Akali leaders' who are guilt-laden and withered enough, for their incapacity to re-energize purposeful responses to the extant challenges. By copiously evading to confront the challenges, the Akali leaders have collusively betrayed the community. Historical record, later, may compare their treasonable

role with that of Tej Singh in the Sikh Wars with the British. The Sikh masses have, time and again, shown their spirited fervour. Their zeal and enthusiasm for the Tercentenary Celebrations of the Birth of the Khalsa and the Quadricentennial Celebrations of the Installation of Guru Granth Sahib as well as the Kar Seva at the Golden Temple in March 2004 are ample evidence of their latent devotion and commitment to the Sikh tradition and heritage.

During the past two decades the Akalis have managed to gain political power twice. The Akali Government in 1985 was the product of Rajiv-Longowal Accord. This Accord, irrespective of what it contained in promises, was with a 'guilty' authority which had displayed evil antecedents. This move sapped that emotive spirit of the Sikh masses which was intensely pervasive at that moment as a revulsion against the attack on their holy shrine. The Akali leadership, instead of converting the prevailing sentiment for a political advantage, chose the path which entrapped them and simultaneously dissolved the Panthic response of the masses. On its premature dismissal in 1987 this Akali Government had entries only on the debit side of its balance sheet; one pertaining to 'Operation Black Thunder' – a legitimizing index for 'Operation Blue Star' – and the other of ignominiously undertaking the construction for completion of Satluj Yamuna Link Canal. The Akali-dominated ministry of 1997 had assumed power when a raw peace prevailed in the state and the Sikhs rightly envisioned a Panthic revival. Quite the contrary happened. Blatant denigration of Panthic institutions and ingress of Rashtriya Sikh Sangat in the religious sphere, were the prominent entries in its record sheet (apart from rampant corruption and nepotism — with rare exception) and all this without any tangible gains during its full term of five years.

There are few redeeming features beyond the desolation described above. The most significant one may be the possible contribution by the diaspora. Much of the exodus of the Sikhs from Punjab can be ascribed to the sociological pressures emanating from the contingent 'Dark Period'. The emigrated Sikhs broadly constitute a larger proportion of intellectually energetic and high profile social component within their regionally determinist circumstances. While they are distanced from the current trends of political and community acculturation in Punjab, the present generation of senior Sikh emigrants

are deeply touched by the dismal situation at the ‘roots’ of their origin. They possess a viable potential of aggregate resources (intellectual, financial, and lobbyist power) for genuine expansion of fundamental Sikh ideological domain. However, in order to arrest possibility of any future duality or segmented approach by the nested sub-groups, a broad-based and participatory social communication with the heartland must be actively maintained. A heartland which has become unattractive for habitation, at least by the future generations of the Sikh diaspora. Noticeably, a widening social discontinuity between the diaspora and their brethren in Punjab is emerging; one, because of level of education (social and professional); and the other, because of the hiatus in economic status. Only the present generation of intelligentsia at both ends has the capacity to reverse this pattern and simultaneously wrest the control of “Panthic wisdom”, both official and formal, from the *Jatbedary* grasp and clear the debris of unwarranted collateral controversies. The other redeeming feature is the impact of prolific production of literature about Sikhism specifically highlighting its visionary ideology for a universal socio-cultural ethical base in the post-modern world. These forces must be harnessed for a regenerative endeavour.

‘All power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely’. And if the ‘absolute power’ is individualized, neutralizing the ‘collective power’, then it is comprehensively damaging. Sadly, the Sikh affairs in Punjab correspond to this deduction. In the sphere of cognitive revolt against the *Jatbedary* culture, the concept of World Sikh Council had initiated what could amount to Panthic ‘collective power’. It had enthused many. However, the structure of World Sikh Council could not gain organic strength. Now an effort by the Institute of Sikh Studies is afoot to reclaim the vitalities of the sentient Sikhs for a federative association of ‘collective power’. This opportunity must not be wasted.



## REVIEWS

### 1) REDUCED TO ASHES

THE INSURGENCY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN PUNJAB  
(FINAL REPORT : VOLUME 1)

### 2) TWENTY YEARS OF IMPUNITY

THE NOVEMBER 1984 POGROMS OF SIKHS IN INDIA

REVIEWED BY I J SINGH\*

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1. *Authors : Ram Narayan Kumar with Amrik Singh, Ashok Agarwal & Jaskaran Kaur*  
*Publisher : South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Kathmandu, Nepal*  
*Edition : 2003; Pages : 635*
  2. *Author : Jaskaran Kaur*  
*Publisher : Ensaaf, USA*  
*Edition : 2004; Pages : 150*

The release of the book *Reduced to Ashes* was deliberately timed for June 2003. Twenty years ago, it was in June 1984 that the Indian army attacked the premier gurdwara (temple) of the Sikhs – The Golden Temple – and forty other gurdwaras across the north Indian state of Punjab. It was this attack more than anything else that set into motion the events chronicled in the book – the insurgency in the Punjab and the horrendous record of human rights violations by the Indian government that are only partially documented in this report.

The violations included mass roundups of young Sikhs and virtual emptying of Punjabi villages by the police. Young male Sikhs were incarcerated for years without trial or any opportunity to defend themselves. Many still languish in prison without any trial or legal redress. Freely utilized by the police, as instruments of “pacification” were abduction, rape and torture, even killings in staged encounters. It might shock readers to know that police had quotas of arrests and killings in order to earn rewards and bonuses.

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CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), India's equivalent of the FBI, finally admitted staged encounters as well as illegal, undocumented mass cremations of hundreds of people. But corrective actions have yet to be initiated. Even though directed by the Supreme Court of India to do so, the CBI has failed to investigate any. The insurgency in Punjab ended over a decade ago, but as yet there has been no attempt at a complete accounting of the dead and maimed. Human rights activists, like Jaswant Singh Khaira, who protested too loudly or investigated too vigorously, disappeared; their tortured bodies surfaced just as mysteriously, sans explanation.

The CBI finally admitted to 582 fully identified, 278 partially identified and 1238 unidentified cremations. Official records now admit that perhaps a little over 2000 people disappeared in those troubled times, but these figures are from three crematoria alone in only the district of Amritsar. Independent observers estimate the numbers to be at least ten times higher. Many, who were cremated by the police, remain only partially or incompletely identified.

The book provides a useful chapter on the genesis of the insurgency in Punjab that was driven largely by the political ambitions of Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. It provides an able analysis of the many inquiry commissions that were appointed under pressure, but were extremely circumscribed in their authority and mandate. How the Indian judiciary was circumvented and tamed, makes a riveting tale. Reproductions from official documents of mass cremations, along with personal interviews with surviving relatives of those who permanently disappeared while in police custody, complete this case against official malfeasance.

That India's record in human rights deserves critical scrutiny is beyond argument. For instance, as recently as two years ago (2002), several thousand Muslims were killed in Gujarat by raging Hindu mobs with, it now appears, the active collusion and support of the government. Amnesty International has issued several highly critical reports on the imbroglio in Punjab and the failure of the government. (Amnesty International has not been permitted by the Indian government to enter India.) Indian citizens, primarily non-Sikh, have also issued several smaller booklets; the government banned many of these. But this book is the most complete recounting so far, and we

have in our hands only the first volume. The second volume promises hundreds of case reports, and personal testimony of ordinary people who feared governmental repercussions and reprisals for daring to speak.

In the 1990's, Yugoslavia and South Africa, emerging out of a period of horrendous violations of civil rights of their citizens, chose to confront their past by appointing "Truth and Reconciliation Commissions." Without such actions, a government risks losing its credibility internally with its own citizens and externally with the international community. Also in neglect, the historical record is lost or tainted. This report on Punjab is a serious attempt to capture and preserve history by giving the victims a voice and to shift the focus of human rights in India from rhetoric to the healing power of truth and reconstruction.

Ram Narayan Kumar, the lead author based in Austria, and Ashok Agarwal, a lawyer and human rights activist, are both non-Sikhs. Of the Sikh co-authors, Amrik Singh is a human rights activist in Punjab and Jaskaran Kaur is a 2003 graduate of Harvard Law School. It should be noted that this report, issued by the "*Committee for the Coordination of Disappearances in Punjab*" (CCDP), was published and printed outside India, in Nepal; the authors were afraid that it would be seized and suppressed if published in India.

The CCDP was started in 1997 to collect and collate information about people who have disappeared from all over the state, to evolve a workable system of state accountability, and to lobby for India to change its laws in conformity with the UN instruments on torture and enforced disappearances, etc. The report carries an introduction by Peter Rosenblum, Director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School, and starts with evidence of mass illegal cremations and the attempt by the Supreme Court of India to intervene on a petition on behalf of those who were missing and unaccounted for in police custody. This is followed by extensive discussion of the case of Jaswant Singh Khaira who first released copies of official documents that confirmed the complicity of security agencies in the undocumented and secret cremations of thousands of people abducted by the police. As a result, Khaira was abducted by armed police in 1995, never to be seen alive again.

The report next provides a fairly detailed narrative on the tortured history of human rights and the failure of the political process in Punjab. This is necessary to understand the issues in Punjab and how they were so mishandled that they brought India to the brink of fragmentation. The movement on Punjab was not secessionist, though it was so cast by Indira Gandhi.

The Indian government enacted draconian laws to deal harshly with political issues that allowed years of incarceration without trial. The Punjab police was transformed into an instrument of torture with quotas and rewards for summary killings of suspected terrorists. The rise of a nascent human rights organization in the face of governmental harassment and opposition is well documented, as is the diminution of the Indian judiciary to an instrument of the government.

Since the body of the report consists of interviews with survivors of the police torture or their relatives, the interview process is critical. Everything hangs on the veracity of the witnesses, cross checking of the information, and in the process confidentiality and safety have to be assured. In the politically volatile and dangerous situation in Punjab, this was not always easy, but Kumar and his team have achieved a near miracle. The interview process is well laid out.

Now this painfully detailed report has been followed by a *Twenty Years of impunity* that carries a foreword by Barbara Crossette, the noted correspondent for the *New York Times*, who covered the horrendous events in Punjab. It details the killings of Sikhs that continued for a decade after 1984, and the denial of justice. In the meantime, many an investigative commission were appointed, more to obscure the truth than to expose it.

Jaskaran Kaur lists the arguments that the Indian government posited to these commissions to justify why police failed to protect any Sikhs or arrest any of the killers. In the submissions of the administrative hierarchy, police inaction was based on 1) the presumption that there was widespread simmering resentment against the Sikhs due to acts of omission and commission, overt and covert; 2) common pattern of allegations that Sikhs were armed with *kirpans* and that's why the mob was armed with *lathis* and wooden sticks, and that had the mob been organized, it would have been armed with deadly weapons; 3) that time was too short to plan and organize a

response to the mob violence; 4) that the charged atmosphere created by the assassination of the Prime Minister; and finally 5) that the few people who were arrested belonged to different areas, indicating that they were not a part of an organized conspiracy.

Such a submission from governmental authority would be laughable if it was not so painfully absurd. It is now clearly and repeatedly established that within hours of Indira Gandhi's assassination, mobs armed with guns, in trucks loaded with kerosene, arrived at Sikh localities. They carried lists of factories owned by Sikhs. They killed Sikhs, looted and burnt their property selectively while sparing others. Policemen stood by, watched the show and actively jeered while they egged on the looters.

Keep in mind that in India weapons are not easily obtained; they are licensed. In 1984 one could not buy kerosene on the open market, trucks are few and at a premium, and lists of house owners take time to procure.

To me, the carnage of Sikhs in 1984 speaks of a high degree of very efficient organization and management that I would term a criminal conspiracy.

Both books contain documentation that is a monumental undertaking and make a painful reading. They are all the more significant because India is the largest democracy on earth and, with Israel, perhaps the only other functioning one in that corner of the world. India's and neighboring Pakistan's nuclear capabilities make this an area ready to blow. That is more than ample reason for the world to pay attention to the fissiparous internal dissensions within India.

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*...Guru Nanak was not a priest either by birth or education, but a man who soared to the loftiest heights of divine emotionalism, and exalted his mental vision to an ethical ideal beyond the concept of Hinduism or Mohammedanism.*

— M A Macauliffe  
*The Sikh Religion*

**THE DULEEP SINGHS**  
**THE PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S MAHARAJA**

**A REVIEW BY HARDEV SINGH\***

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*Author : Peter Bance*

*Publisher : Sutton Publishing Limited, UK*

*Price : £ 18.99; Pages : 160*

After my sentimental journey to Elveden in UK, where the last Maharaja of Sikh kingdom of Lahore lies buried in the church cemetery, my curiosity to collect information about the family of Maharaja Duleep Singh was aroused. The curator of Ancient House Museum at Thetford came to my help. I collected all information about new publications about Maharaja Duleep Singh and his family. The book under review is the latest in the series published in 2004.

As the title suggests, the book is a pictorial album of Maharaja Duleep Singh's family, being a lavishly illustrated account with almost 200 images of the Maharaja, the Maharani and their children. The book *The Duleep Singhs* is divided into eleven chapters. The historical origin of the Sikh kingdom is traced in the introduction. First chapter deals with the birth of Duleep Singh, his coronation as Maharaja and his surrender before the Governor General Sir Henry Hardinge in Lahore after defeat of the Khalsa Army in the first Sikh war. The pictures are based on paintings and engravings, and illustrate the poignancy of the situation. One is moved to watch the surrender ceremony of eight year old Maharaja Duleep Singh and annexation of Sikh kingdom after the second Sikh war. Photography and Duleep Singh were contemporary phenomena in India. A calotype photograph of the

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\* Dr, # 360, Sector 71, Mohali - 160 070

Maharaja in 1848 by John McLosh is also included, which may be considered as the first photograph taken by using a camera in Punjab.

Chapter 2 deals with Maharaja's life in England. Under the tutelage of Dr John Login and Lena Login, Duleep Singh was deported to England in April 1854 and separated from his mother Rani Jind Kaur. Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England received Duleep Singh at Buckingham Palace on July 1, 1854. He became a favourite of the Queen and was accorded the rank of a European prince. The most beautiful paintings of Maharaja Duleep Singh were got prepared by the Queen in her presence from the top-most painters of Europe. Chapter 2 is fully illustrated by these paintings and palaces where Duleep Singh resided in England.

Chapter 3 describes Maharaja's trip to India, his emotional reunion with his mother Rani Jind Kaur, his second trip to India for the last rites of his mother, his marriage with Bamba Muller on his return journey at Cairo and return of the royal couple to England. The Maharaja was not allowed to visit Punjab to perform the last rites of his mother. She was cremated at Bombay and her ashes were immersed in the river Godavari at Nasik. The chapter includes two unique photographs of Maharaja Duleep Singh and Maharani Bamba in wedding robes. It was a Christian marriage ceremonised in the Presbyterian Church of Cairo.

Chapter 4, *The Suffolk Squire*, is the most illustrated chapter of the book. In 1863, Maharaja Duleep Singh left London and purchased an estate of 17,000 acres in Elveden on the Norfolk-Suffolk border. He renovated Elveden Hall in the oriental style and raised his family of 6 children. Maharaja Duleep Singh indulged in his passion for hunting and shooting, and arranged *shikar* parties for the royal guest, Prince of Wales. He was a great lover of *shikar* like his father. Imitating his royal friends, the Maharaja had a flirtatious nature. His notorious escapades to Paris and London clubs are mentioned in this chapter. He displayed all the virtues and vices of an oriental monarch and indulged in high life of London. The chapter illustrates the royal visitors to Elveden Hall residence of Maharaja, elite society ladies and Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia who was designated as Prime Minister-in-exile for Maharaja Duleep Singh later on. It was Thakur Singh who persuaded Maharaja to return to the Sikh faith and fight for his lost

Sikh kingdom. The Maharaja was fully convinced of the betrayal and treachery played by the British and he revolted against the Empire.

Chapter 5 describes Maharaja's wish to return to India for taking *khande di pabul*. He was off-loaded from the ship at Aden and ordered to return to England. Before his return, he was re-initiated into the Sikh faith as a Khalsa. His desire to visit Punjab was never fulfilled, and in frustration he resigned his pension and took residence in Paris. He was so much annoyed with the British Empire in India that he joined a revolutionary group in France and travelled to Russia to seek help from the Russian Czar. The Maharaja was not a gifted conspirator. His Russian collaborator died and by a strange coincidence of misfortunes, he failed in his mission to liberate India from the clutches of British Empire. He died in a Paris hotel in utter frustration. This chapter narrates a sad story full of poignant details of Maharaja's life in Paris.

Chapters 6-10 are dedicated to the six children of Maharaja Duleep Singh : Princes Victor, Albert Edward and Fredenick Duleep Singh and Princesses Catherine, Sophia and Bamba Duleep Singh. Maharaja wanted his eldest son to marry in India but he did not agree calling the Maharaja 'my idiotic father'. Victor studied at Eton and Cambridge where he met his true love, Anne Blanche of Coventry and married her. Duleep Singh did not attend the marriage ceremony. Even Queen Victoria was not happy with Victor over this marriage. She treated Victor as her god-son. She called the Princess Anne, the pretty wife of Victor to her audience and ordered her to leave England and take a vow never to have children, the would-be heir apparent of the Sikh Kingdom. The couple followed the royal command faithfully and never returned to England.

Albert Edward Duleep Singh died at the young age of thirteen. Maharaja Duleep Singh visited from Paris to see his ailing son and wept bitterly, but he returned and could not attend his funeral. Prince Frederick Duleep Singh was the most talented of all the princes. He went to Cambridge and got an MA degree in history. He was a keen collector of old books, coins, stained glass and other artifacts. He was a kind-hearted man and became very popular in his County as the 'Black Prince'. He was historian, archaeologist, philanthropist and a great lover of music. He was keen to promote the legacy of Maharaja



Duleep Singh. Keeping this in view, he donated all his art collection to set up the Ancient House Museum in Thetford, which is a living testimony to the family of Maharaja Duleep Singh. Chapter 7 is fully illustrated depicting the life of Frederick Duleep Singh, who remained a bachelor all his life.

The author has devoted three chapters to Princesses Catherine, Sophia and Bamba Duleep Singh. Catherine was ranked as one of the most beautiful European princesses, but she did not marry. She spent most of her time in Germany with her governess, Lina Schafer. Princess Sophia was the youngest of the three sisters, a firebrand like her father and became a leading figure fighting for the voting rights of women in England. During the first World War, Princess Sophia visited wounded Punjabi troops in the Indian army and gave them mementos as a grand daughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She kept her links with the family of Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia who served her father faithfully and offered to adopt Pritam Singh as her son.

Princess Bamba Duleep Singh was the most colourful character in Duleep Singh's family. She was a rebel like her father and began styling herself as the 'Queen of the Punjab'. She frequently visited India and married colonel Sutherland who became Principal at King Edward's Medical College, Lahore. Once Sophia and Bamba visited Lahore in 1924 and the crowds gathered from Punjab villages to see the daughters of their last king, Duleep Singh. The police dispersed the crowd, as it was thought to be politically too dangerous for the British Empire. Princess Bamba visited Khalsa College, Amritsar during the 1940s and in 1944 she shifted to Lahore. She never accepted the partition of Punjab and settled in Lahore, the capital of Sikh kingdom, as a permanent resident. She set up a museum in Lahore fort which is known as 'Princess Bamba Collection'. The last member of Duleep Singh's family, Princess Bamba died on March 10, 1957 and is buried in the Christian Cemetery in Lahore.

*The Legacy of Maharaja Duleep Singh* is the last chapter of the book by Peter Bance. It is followed by Maharaja Duleep Singh's family tree. One wonders, how all the direct descendants of Maharaja Ranjit Singh vanished leaving no heir apparent. All of them died issueless as a consequence of Guru's prophecy; it is a myth created in Punjab.

After procuring the book from Sutton Publishing, UK, another riddle appeared before me about the identity of its author, Peter Bance. On the internet, I requested for his biodata. It was a pleasant surprise that Peter Bance is a third generation Sikh (nee Bhupinder Singh), settled in England. He is a keen collector of Sikh antiques, including an unrivalled collection on the Duleep Singhs, which form part of the book under review. I congratulate the young author (29 years old) of *The Duleep Singhs* for writing this illustrated historical album after a strenuous research of eight years. The book will prove to be a collector's choice and must decorate the drawing room of every Sikh family keen to probe its heritage.

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*Now there is here presented a religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influences. Based on the concept of the unity of God, it rejected Hindu formalities and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual, and standards, which were totally opposed to the theological beliefs of Guru Nanak's age and country. As we shall see hereafter, it would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system.*

— M A Macauliffe  
*The Sikh Religion*

## AMAZING TRAVELS OF GURU NANAK

A REVIEW BY SADHU SINGH\*

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*Author : Col Dr Dalvinder Singh Chahal*

*Publisher : Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC, Amritsar*

*Price : Not mentioned; Pages : 284*

Col Dr Dalvinder Singh Grewal is an eminent scholar, who has the distinction of having 12 post-graduate degrees. His research about the language, culture and inter-relations among the Akka, Meeri Akka and Meezi tribes of Arunachal Pradesh was the thesis of his Ph D. This research has been recognized as authentic one by UNESCO. Col Dr Grewal is deeply interested in the study and research of Sikh religion. His research of two places in Sikkim and Arunachal visited by Guru Nanak (Dang Mar and Taposthan of Guru Nanak Dev Ji) inspired and exhorted the army personnel to construct gurdwaras at these two places. He has visited the “places connected with the Second and Third *Udasis* of Guru Nanak and collected material from the local people, scholars, lamas, and religious books. The author while following the trail of the Second and Third *Udasis* to Sri Lanka and China describes topography, route and brief historical background in such a way that a deep link is established with the place. Moreover, the readers feel as if they were themselves the travellers. The reader is thrilled and amazed at the epic feat of endurance and courage by an outwardly frail adventurer Guru Nanak. The *Udasis* have ensured for Guru Nanak an imperishable place in the history of human endeavour. Guru Nanak as a man could stand against the roughest elements in nature and survive. He stood against monsters and fanatics, and brought them to the righteous path.

*Amazing Travels of Guru Nanak* combines high adventure against a fascinating historical pilgrimage by the founder of a great faith for

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the whole creation. Guru Nanak was the bard of the Lord and he rendered service to God while serving mankind. He travelled from 1498 to 1524 AD, covering Russia to Sri Lanka and China to Africa. The book deals mainly with the Second and Third *Udasis* of Guru Nanak. The author has beautifully recorded the places and legends (connected with the places visited by Guru Nanak) – material items, stories told by lamas visiting Harmandir Sahib and traditions of worshipping idols. Although the evidence has been checked with the legends recorded in the *Janamsakhis*, yet the author feels that more exploration should be done.

Guru Nanak was an enlightened being and his mission was to redeem the lost souls. He left his home in search of righteousness and evolved a new philosophy of life – All Men Are Brothers. Through debates and discussions he brought to the path of righteousness the Yogis, Sidhs, Sanyasis and other religious heads who had gone astray and forgotten their respective duties towards mankind. Bhai Gurdas sums up the achievement of Guru Nanak in the couplet :

ਮਰਿਆ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥

Guru Nanak visited most of the places connected with the seats of religious sects. He held discussions and discourses with the heads of the sects and persuaded them to discard the religiosity and follow the righteous path. In this way, Guru Nanak had a large number of followers in his own lifetime known as *Nanak nam leva*. The author has made mention of many remote areas of the North East tribes and the Banjaras and Sikligars of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

The interviews with Rigdzin Rimpoche, Sri J K Bhutia, Head Lama of Lachen Lumpun Lama at Zimithang, Lt Col Bikkam Singh and Col Harpal Singh Bakshi, are very informative and educative. They reveal certain facts which are deeply spiritual in nature and embedded in the memory of the local people and traditions. The reader comes to know how reverently Guru Nanak is called Nanak Lama, Guru Rimpoche and Nanak Rishi.

In every way *Amazing Travels of Guru Nanak* measures up to great scholarly work on Sikh religion, history and culture - in spirited characterization, vivid description of Nature, people and places, flora and fauna. The distinguished author has brilliantly brought to life the vistas of whole primitive and medieval world with its feuds, its follies,

its fallacies, its fairs, its religions and its humanity. It is suggested that the next edition should give the page and verse in Gurmukhi script wherever reference is given from Guru Granth Sahib. The spelling mistakes and punctuation marks should be taken care of.

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#### **ANNUAL SEMINAR**

The Annual Seminar of the Institute Of Sikh Studies will be held on the 13th & 14th November, 2004 at Chandigarh at its headquarters, Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Kanthala, Tribune Chowk, Chandigarh. The theme is :

#### ***Martyrdom in Sikhism***

#### ***With Particular Reference to the Sahibzadas.***

The seminar is dedicated to the 3rd Centenary of the martyrdom of Sahibzadas being observed during this year. The 13th November is also the martyrdom day of Baba Deep Singh.

All are cordially invited to attend. Scholars are requested to present papers on the subject, which should reach the Institute by the 1st October, 2004.

## EAST AND WEST CHANGING EQUATIONS

A REVIEW BY JASWANT SINGH\*

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*Author : Dr Sawraj Singh*

*Publisher : Panj Nad Publications, Jalandhar, Punjab*

*First Edition : January 2003*

*Pages : 80; Price : Rs 50, \$5*

Dr Sawraj Singh is a practising surgeon in America for the last three decades. This very informative book is a compilation of his journalistic essays and lectures delivered at the conferences he has been addressing. Out of a bouquet of 30 essays, I shall deal with only seven of them as a sample.

### INDIA NORTH AND SOUTH CHANGING REALITIES

His South is south of Godavari River, “People are cleanliness-minded, simple, more restrained, deeply attached to their culture, less assertive, less aggressive and less extravagant than Punjabis. Mostly Punjabis are vibrant, enterprising, hardworking, having lot of drive.” He laments, Green revolution of Punjab has led to environmental damage and economic destabilization. High rate of suicides of Punjab farmer is a dark spot. He points to a similar American experiment in Mexico, exodus of peasants to Western world. Whereas in South, during his stay in Chennai people were not looking westward, trees and bushes were well trimmed. He has shared similar experience with intellectuals, journalists of the North. He highlights 0% population growth and practically 100% literacy in South. These are the two bug bears of India.

### ALMATY SUMMIT

Talking of summit of Asian countries held in Almaty, capital of Kazakhstan, he emphasizes three main historical trends — Asia becoming the leading region, China the largest economy, Islam the largest religion.

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\* Maj Gen (Dr) AVSM, # 1801, Sector 33-D, Chandigarh

Sixteen countries participated; and Russia and China were undeclared leaders. Anti-Bush demonstrations in Paris and Germany are mentioned. Russia and China are moving closer. Author has emphasized that BJP's anti-Muslim stand in Gujarat has cost the party dearly. He feels that same fate awaits the party at the Centre with Congress as the gainer. "Almaty Summit is an important milestone in Asia's ascent", opines the doctor.

#### **CANADA AND AMERICA SING DIFFERENT TUNES AT KANANKASKI**

In a recent G-8 Summit at Kanankaski, Alberta, Canada chose the way of dialogue and cooperation with third world against America's policy of confrontation. Canada has unilaterally written off its debts of the third world countries.... It was decided to make Russia a full-fledged member... under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia is coming back as world power. Canada's concept of social welfare state is closer to that of Europe and Japan.

#### **WHY SHOULD ABDUL KALAM BE UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED ?**

Of course, author's prediction has come true and Abdul Kalam is already the President of India. The author marshals reasons.... he is supported by BJP and NDA.... left parties feel Abdul Kalam's choice by BJP was to cover up its performance in Gujarat, but actually his name was suggested by TDP, and BJP tried to get mileage out of it. By doing so its good relations with third world countries mostly Muslims will further improve. By electing him, India has sent a message especially to Islamic countries of its non-communal and liberal stance.

#### **COMMUNITY LACKING A COLLECTIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Indian community is at a higher risk of heart disease and at a younger age - a result of study in Berkley centre, University of California. Some of the causes enumerated are consuming saturated fats, body shape with more fat on abdomen and hip area, stress related to immigration, and lack of community support in a society that lays more emphasis on new Mercedes, new house, cruise to Alaska or Caribbean. By contrast, Americans have inhouse library and read books, inhouse swimming pool and they swim therein, and they like to play tennis. I had the pleasure of seeing all that during our short visit to America. Indians play deafening party music. Incidence of depression is very high among them, and some try to drown these symptoms with drinks and, in the process, they drown

themselves. He quotes examples of children jealousy. Compared to other communities, Indians do not give the required collective support, as Indians by nature are individualistic and the community has fallen victim to its own success.

#### CHINA CONTINUES TO SHINE IN THE EAST

The author narrates a friend's experience of China visit where for four months he taught in the Universities of Beijing, Shanghai, Anhui. He highlights China's 'abundance of food, growth and absorption of new technology, and enthusiasm for higher education. There are all kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables. One good meal there cost him only 60 cents in American currency. He found deep respect for women. Chinese women without losing their femininity have achieved equality with men. Mao-Tse-Tung is considered a great political leader, profound philosopher and thinker by his countrymen, whereas in East Europe, Lenin and Stalin never got such accolades. Shanghai, the largest city of China is the most beautiful city in the world as per his friend. China pays its employees very well. Chinese approach to morality is close to Indian's — they feel sex is only after marriage. Thus, incidence of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases is very low.

#### SIKHISM, THE ZENITH OF EASTERN CULTIVATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

Cultivational spirituality stresses the inner development and is based on knowledge (*gyan*), the highest spiritual knowledge is *Brahmgian* to which Indian sub-continent has made maximum contribution. Guru Nanak described God as timeless and constant creator, both transcendent and immanent. We have a major contradiction in being a global community without a global perspective. Sikh religion can provide that global perspective and help resolve the contradiction. 'Sikh religion should be seen as the essence of the eastern spirituality', emphasizes the author. I feel like reviewing all the chapters of this educative and interesting book, but I am reluctant to do so for fear of readers only reading the review and skipping the wonderful book. It will be just fair that I mention in passing *The Survival Guide for Emigrating Indians* and author's paper presented at the American College of Surgeons at Chennai in February 2002. The crisp, succinct, informative, 2-3 paged articles are refreshing and a must-read material. I am especially thrilled to read a surgeon writing on such vital subjects — that shows his versatility.



## NEWS & VIEWS

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### SYL ISSUE

Right since the sixties when the Central Government willy-nilly acquiesced to the formation of a Punjabi speaking State, it has not been fair in its dispensation toward Punjab in the matter of division of assets and liabilities amongst the successor States. One of the contentious issues created mischievously transgressing the explicit provisions of the Constitution of India concerns the so-called SYL canal. The Institute of Sikh Studies and its members in individuals capacities have all these decades been highlighting the high handedness of the Central Government as regard the violation of constitutional rights of the people of Punjab.

When the Punjab Assembly unanimously passed the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004 on July 12, 2004 to safeguard the interests of the people of Punjab to some extent, the Central Government, instead of conducting itself fairly and neutrally, resolved to seek advice of the Supreme Court on the validity of Punjab Act, but they (Central Government) have never bothered to have the provisions of Sections 78,79,80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 appraised by the Supreme Court as to their validity inspite of umpteen requests from various fora all these four decades. And now while seeking guidance from the Supreme Court about the Punjab enactment, which is a valid piece of law, it has not asked the Supreme Court to examine the constitutionality of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966 (Sections 78, 79, 80) on the basis of which Punjab river waters are sought to be given to non-riparian States patently debarred constitutionally from laying any claim on the Punjab river waters.

During the July-September quarter, the IOSS and its members continued their efforts to put across correct and true aspects concerning the SYL issue. All the issues concerning the SYL canal project were brought to the notice of the distinguished audiences at various seminars addressed by the members of the IOSS on different occasions.

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Sardar Gurdev Singh addressed a big seminar on *Pani Punjab De* (Waters of Punjab) organised by the Khalsa Panchyat in Shivalik Public School, Sector 41, Chandigarh on July 25, 2004. Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon and Sardar Pritam Singh Kumedan also addressed the seminar.

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Bhartiya Kissan Union organised a massive conference on *Punjab de Daryai Pani* (River Waters of Punjab) on August 1, 2004 in Kisan Bhavan, Sector 35, Chandigarh. It was addressed by Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, Sardar Gurdev Singh, President IOSS, Vice-Chancellors SS Bhoparai, K S Aulakh, S P Singh – of Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar – Dr Manmohan Singh, IAS (retd) and Sardars Bhupinder Singh Mann, Balbir Singh Rajewal, Baldev Singh, H S Bajwa, prominent leaders of the Bhartiya Kisan Union.

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Sardar Gurdev Singh, accompanied by Bhai Ashok Singh, Maj Gen Narindar Singh, Lt Gen Kartar Singh Gill, Sardar Sadhu Singh Deol addressed the Press corps of Chandigarh and electronic media on the SYL Canal issue on August 6, 2004 in the Press Club, Chandigarh to put across constitutional, legal, technical, economic, social, political, sentimental, historical aspects of the issue.

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On August 26, 2004 a big seminar was organised by the Sikh Students Union in the Punjab University, Chandigarh on the SYL canal issue. Dr S S Johl presided over the seminar, Sardar Gurdev Singh, Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon and Dr Gurbir Singh Dhillon, Chief Engineer (retd) threw light on various facets of the problem.

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On June 25, 2004, Punjab Heritage and Education Foundation organised a *Shabeedi Virsa Divis* in Sri Guru Gobind Singh Senior Secondary School, Sector 35-A, Chandigarh. Dr Kharak Singh, Dr

Kirpal Singh, Sardar Gurdev Singh, Dr Gurbax Singh Shergill, Prof Sukhdayal Singh, Head, Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala addressed the audience and stressed upon the need of preserving the rich heritage of Punjab and learning lessons from it for practical action.

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Shabad Kirtan was held in Sri Guru Gobind Singh College, Sector 26, Chandigarh on July 17, 2004 for the successful completion of the current session 2004-05. Sardar Gurdev Singh and Dr Kuldip Singh, Principal of the College exhorted the students and staff to imbibe the values of service to humanity as preached by the Ten Gurus and enunciated in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

#### **BUS SERVICE TO LAHORE – NANAKANA SAHIB**

In a letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2004 addressed to Shri Natwar Singh, Minister for External Affairs, Govt. of India, Dr M.S. Gill, M.P., former Chief Election Commissioner, has demanded a regular bus service between Amritsar and Lahore and well as Nanakana Sahib. The letter *inter alia* reads, "...it is unfortunate that there is no bus service between the twin cities of Amritsar and Lahore. Surely this should have been the first one to be opened. Today Punjabis have to first come to Delhi, buy an expensive ticket if available, and then travel all the way back to Amritsar, to cross to Lahore 15 miles away. A bus service between these two cities, will promote contact, positive relations, tourism, and above all commerce. Trade between our two countries is bound to expand. The Amritsar border is the natural opening for it, and will bring jobs and income to our people. I would, therefore, request you to give the opening of the Amritsar to Lahore bus service the highest priority, and take it up in your talks with the Pakistan Foreign Minister in August.

A second issue that deserves your consideration, is the need for a bus service between Amritsar and Nanakana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, and sacred not only to the Sikhs but also to all of us in this country. The world community promotes and encourages visits by people to their sacred places. We in India spend Rs. 200 crores a year from the Budget, to help our Muslim brothers, make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Surely it is as necessary, to assist our people to visit Nanakana Sahib. It is barely 30 kms. from Lahore, and it should be possible to allow a regular bus service from Amritsar to Nanakana Sahib, and back all in a day. People could cross over at Wagah, make the holy visit, and come back by evening. The cost to the citizen would be nominal. In the new relaxed situation. I would request you to take this up also, with Pakistan in August. It is a small but vital gesture, for which not only all Punjabis, but also all Indians will thank you."

In his reply Shri K. Natwar Singh stated that response of



























